

THE

# Nonconformist.

THE DISSIDENCE OF DISSENT AND THE PROTESTANTISM OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION.

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## Eccliaistical Affairs.

### THE NONCONFORMIST CONFERENCE.

We are thankful to be able at length to speak of the Conference of Nonconformists at Manchester in the past tense. Considering the rather confused and uncertain manner in which, on its first proposition, they confronted Mr. Forster's educational policy, it will not be surprising that deep anxiety was mingled with hope in regard to what might be the outcome of the deliberations of so large a representative assembly. That anxiety has been relieved. All doubt has been dispersed. No more imposing, no more unanimous demonstration of opinion or feeling has occurred within our memory. The postponement of the Conference in consequence of the dangerous illness of the Prince of Wales, appropriate and, indeed, inevitable as it was, appeared at first sight to throw a dark cloud over the prospects of success which might have been reasonably indulged in some weeks ago. The alteration of the date on account of that event rather furthered than hindered the object which the promoters of the gathering had in view. An additional month for quiet review of the position, had induced many waverers to take a calm and dispassionate survey of the whole question they had been invited to discuss, and from all parts of the kingdom representative men came on Tuesday last to the appointed meetings, with their minds fully made up as to the principle they should enounce, and the policy they should pursue. The consequence was a marvellous exemplification of unanimity, which took even the Assembly itself by surprise. From the first moment that the keynote was struck by the chairman of the public meeting on Tuesday evening, to the closing speech of the chairman of the last sitting of Thursday night, there was scarcely a difference of opinion amongst eighteen hundred delegates, either in regard to the purport or to the form of the resolutions submitted to them. What they agreed upon is known to the public. The decision and fervour of spirit with which the agreement was arrived at and recorded, can only be fully appreciated by those who in person witnessed the proceedings.

Passing over matters of comparatively minor importance, we have, in the first place, to congratulate the members of the Conference upon the soundness of the principle upon which, in reference to the question of national education, they took their stand. It was no new principle to the Nonconformist body. It was only a new application of the old principle they had professed for the last forty years. It was that the State, and especially in a mixed community like ours, cannot undertake the work of religious teaching, in church or in school, without violating the rights of conscience on the one hand, or doing despite to the dignity of

truth on the other. We were convinced when the Education Bill was before Parliament in 1870 that this fundamental principle, as true in the education of children as of adults, would, in the course of time, receive recognition by the Nonconformist bodies. We did not anticipate, however, the rapidity with which their hesitation to acknowledge it would be overcome. Thanks to the operation of the Elementary Education Act, to the unexpected results of the cumulative vote, to the intensely sectarian proceedings of many of the school boards, to the manifest tendency of the system in force towards putting the youthful mind of the country, to an immense extent, into clerical and priestly hands, and, perhaps, more than all, to the official bias of the Education Department in that direction, every week has made fresh converts to what has been reproachfully designated as "the secular system," and has brought conviction home to many reluctant minds that there can be only one basis of national education consistent with equal justice to all religious parties, namely, to confine the authority and action of the State to secular teaching, and to assign religious teaching exclusively to the voluntary efforts of religious societies. If no other decision had been come to by the Manchester Conference, this would have amply justified its meeting.

With regard to the resolution passed at the Thursday morning sitting, which dealt with the political relation of Nonconformists to the Liberal party, we are, of course, prepared to anticipate loud outcries from that section of the party which has hitherto assumed to direct its course. And yet it seems to us impossible to urge a valid objection to the conclusion arrived at. It was reached, no doubt, under a pressure of conviction absolutely painful. It appeared to everyone present as an inevitable necessity. It was not an outburst of impatience with the slow progress of statesmen and politicians with whom they have been formerly allied. It was a protest against positive retrogression. It was as much a protest on behalf of the country as on behalf of Nonconformist interests. The members of the Conference had come to know the true significance of what is called "undenominational education." They saw it already embodied in the Elementary Education Act for England and Wales, and vividly illustrated by well-nigh every turn of its working. They detected it in the Scotch Education Bill, and they foresaw it, as a just sequence, in the settlement of the Irish education question. They believed not only that these several measures are connected in one system, but that they were meant to be so by one pervading purpose. If permitted to develop itself to its full extent it would be the putting back of the intellectual and moral cultivation of the people of the United Kingdom half a century at least. It would involve the use of the authority and influence of law in giving a fresh impulse to priestly assumptions. It would be adding a fresh and large endowment from national funds to the Anglican, Scotch, and Irish Roman Catholic Churches. That any statesman, claiming to be inspired by patriotic views, or to hold opinions in consonance with modern civilisation, could have judged it expedient, for the sake of a premature settlement of the question, to expose his country to so grave a danger, might well astonish, not only the Nonconformist committees, but every intelligent Englishman conversant with the history of European nations.

Against this declension the Manchester Conference took up its position with unfaltering determination. Come weal, come woe, the Dissenters will not be threatened or cajoled into giving their assent to this political retrogression. If their refusal to sanction the backward march of their political leaders towards clerical ascendancy, even though it be made under the guise of religious equality, should lead to a disruption of the party, to a breaking up of the Government, and to the temporary triumph of their Conservative foes, they will know how to wait in patience the disastrous course of events. They are not strangers to the experience of winning by losing. What they are strangers to is allowing themselves to be dragged back from positions in advance, which they have gained by their own labour and self-sacrifice. To the full extent of the ground ceded to clerics and priests by the Education Act and the Education Department, they will insist upon being once more led forward by those whom they desire to follow. It is all that they can do. It is what they are bound to do. It is what they will speedily succeed in doing. It may derange Ministerial plans. It may dislocate the Liberal party, to which they have been evermore loyal. These are not consequences for which they are responsible. Those consequences must rest with those who planned and carried into effect the surrender of national education into the hands of priests and clergy. The Nonconformists have been thrown not merely upon their own defence, but upon the defence of the highest interests of the country. They are ready to accept, though with unfeigned sorrow, the perils they must brave, simply because they are ready to do the duty that has been imposed upon them. They have saved the liberties of England before. They will not shrink from either the toil or the obloquy, the suffering or the patience needed to save them again.

### THE PRESS ON THE CONFERENCE.

WHETHER the firing of big guns in sufficient number really produces rain, as sometimes alleged, we are not scientific enough to decide; but certainly the heavy artillery of the Manchester Conference has brought down a plentiful shower of editorial comments, not without a sprinkling of extra-Parliamentary eloquence. From these we gather that the general feeling amongst the supporters of Mr. Forster's Act is one of amazement touched with horror at the unexpected unanimity, enthusiasm, and thoroughness which characterised the proceedings of the delegates and the policy announced. Now, whether the new programme of the League and the distinct tone assumed by some leading men may be rightly described as a "change of front" on the part of Nonconformists generally, we do not care to inquire. We at least have no such change to make. The policy of the Manchester Conference is precisely that upon which we have insisted as inevitable, ever since a governmental scheme of education was felt to be a national need. And farther, we cannot repress the suggestion, that had our opponents more correctly estimated the strength and persistency of conviction which animates the movement toward the disestablishment of religion in general, they would hardly have been so much surprised at the hostility excited by the fresh endowment of denominational schools in particular. In this, as in many another instance of apparently sudden enthusiasm, the only change is this, that attention has been at last awakened and the issue thoroughly understood. And for this our opponents have mainly themselves to



thank. For, believing, as we do, that at this stage of the great controversy it is best to concentrate attention on the main objective point, the disestablishment of the Church itself, we ventured to suggest, when the question of the payment of fees was raised on the London School Board, that if our opponents in great towns would have the moderation to refrain from pressing the question, it would hardly be raised for the present in country districts; and thus a practical compromise would have been effected, pending the decision of the greater issue. Preferring however a hollow and temporary triumph, they succeeded far better than we could have hoped to succeed ourselves in rousing the attention of Nonconformists in Birmingham, Liverpool, and all the great centres of population. Hence the bold, unmistakable, and determined enunciation of policy which seems to have taken our adversaries so much by surprise.

Through all the grades of the newspaper hierarchy, from the thunder of the *Times* to the penny trumpet of the *Daily Telegraph*, a sort of last dying and forlorn appeal is made to the religious feelings with which Nonconformists are justly credited. Even the *Standard*, with a gush of emotion following an explosion of wrath, urges that "the contest will in future be reduced to the single but all important issue of education that is religious, or education that is anti-religious," and believes that we, equally with Churchmen, must needs prefer the former. The *Spectator* puts it to us that what we ask is "a still wider separation of religion and life." And, finally, Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, following the precedent of Mr. Disraeli's patronage of the angels, pathetically exclaims, "Gentlemen, if this controversy is to be fought out to the bitter end, I make my choice for religion." Good Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen! Pious Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen! Did it not strike him for a moment, when thus suggesting enmity to religion as the only reason for an opposite view, that the men he thus taunts are the descendants, if not in blood, better still in principle and practice, of that Puritan party to which England owes, directly or indirectly, all the vital religion she possesses? In times when anything more than the most formal ceremonial of religion not only stamped a man as vulgar, but well nigh branded him as a felon, the party legitimately represented by the Nonconformists of to-day kept alive in their conventicles the sacred flame, which afterwards kindled afresh the glow of devotion in the Established Church herself. Does not Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen know perfectly well that the controversy is not between "an education that is religious and an education that is anti-religious," but between one mode and another of giving to education that religious character which we all desire? And knowing it, how can he, or how can the party he represents, dare to introduce mere "bunkum" like this into a great question of imperial policy? We venture to say that the delegates at Manchester were almost as truly representatives of the free religious life of the country as they were of Nonconformist opposition to the Government educational policy. The ministers and the Sunday-school teachers of some thousand active Christian congregations were there, congregations which ask no alms from national property for the supply of their religious needs, congregations which employ an army of volunteer evangelists far more numerous than the clergy, and which, by the sacrifices they make and the labours they carry out prove, in eloquence more genuine than the extra-Parliamentary sort, the pre-eminent importance they attach to religion.

But if, as is perhaps the mere charitable interpretation, speakers like Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, and papers like the *Spectator*, think to alarm the amiable weakness which is to be found in the ranks of Nonconformity as well as elsewhere, their success, if any, will be superficial and temporary only. And for this reason. The strongest impulse which animates Free Churchmen in insisting upon the limitation of national school teaching to secular subjects is neither a sectarian bias, nor antipathy to priestly domination; but a deep and heartfelt conviction that if religion has lost its hold on the masses, if it is remembered with disfavour as a matter of catechisms and creeds and texts, if it is regarded as a sort of social fetish of the middle and upper classes, we owe this in very great measure to the daily religious drill inflicted on the children of the last forty or fifty years. "Religious," we have said; ecclesiastical or sectarian would have been a better word. Let anyone note the reports made on religious instruction by the Government inspectors, let him remark how rarely these for the most part prejudiced observers speak with anything like genuine satisfaction of the spiritual influence exerted; and how very often the "dry explanation of words and formularies," the failure to "infuse

a religious spirit into lessons about religion," the futile results of "so-called religious instruction," are matters of lamentation and reproach; and if he tries to estimate the probable effects of this mechanical grinding in spiritual things on the opening minds of children, he will perhaps be less puzzled to account for the repugnance of those children in after life to religion of every sort.

With singular blindness to the true significance of the facts, the friends of denominational education are never tired of proclaiming that the religious difficulty has no existence except in the brains of agitators; that the parents don't care what dogmas are taught to their children; that they are quite content to leave that to the school-managers or the parson. We have had flourished in our faces statistics of large schools, where half the children were Dissenters, while only some five or six per cent. were withdrawn by their parents from the religious teaching, which included the Church Catechism. Surely the most obvious remark suggested by such facts is one which is made by Mr. Blakiston, himself a clergyman, in his report for 1869—"So little do Nonconformists find their children affected by the so-called religious instruction given in most national schools, that they seldom withdraw their children from that teaching, even where the teacher's views are more than ordinarily distasteful." But we think the matter a little more serious than this. For remembering what the Church Catechism is, and what lies it puts into the mouths of little children who have no godfathers and godmothers, or who have perhaps never been baptized at all, we think this sublime indifference on the part both of parents and teachers to any significance in religious lessons has, in all probability, been a fruitful cause of spiritual apathy and unbelief.

The unpractical sentimentalists represented by the *Spectator* may taunt us with caring only about Church ascendancy, and nothing for the interests of the children. They may speak with ungenerous contempt of "Sunday-schools, those too often dismal and narrow sectarian agencies," a description as ridiculously false as it is unamiably bitter. But we believe that none bless the children of the nation with a richer inheritance than those who succeed in setting the institutions of our country upon a broader and juster basis. In the *Spectator's* view love for the children of England may be shown best by forcing upon their tender minds the fact of sectarian divisions, and parading these in conscience clauses upon the wall. The *Spectator's* notion of exhibiting the intimate union of "religion and life" may be the "time-table" which draws a hard and fast line between things sacred and secular. We confess that to us experience of life as well as the spirit of the Gospel would seem to teach a different lesson. The best influences of religion are not confined to instruction in dogma, nor even to the reading of the Bible. A teacher who possesses spiritual life cannot fail to affect his pupils with sympathy, in modes involving no proselytism, and to which no sectary or even secularist could possibly object. The habitual reverence which comes of secret communion with God, the charity which is produced by a comprehensive sympathy with Divine love, the earnestness in pursuit of truth, which belongs in the highest sense only to supreme loyalty of soul—all are qualities which cannot fail to exert a religious influence apart from dogma, and to illustrate far more nobly than any arrangement of a time-table conscience clause, that pervading interpenetration of religion and life which the *Spectator* professes to desire. We do not indeed undervalue the importance of dogmatic teaching. It supplies more or less imperfectly the objects of faith which inspire all higher affections. But experience shows that while those objects are very differently conceived, the graces of character inspired by them may be identical. Thus, while the state of religious parties makes it quite impossible to give any dogmatic instruction in national schools, without giving offensive prominence to sectarian divisions, the moral virtues sustained by religion may be exhibited, and the practical influences of spiritual life exerted, not only without injury to any conscience, but with a benign tendency towards Catholicity of feeling. When the coarse hand of secular law shall have been withdrawn from the subtle springs of national religion; when no arrangements of school or University, any longer encourage the bitterness of sectarian animosity; when children of every denomination shall meet for daily instruction on terms of equality, without any note whatever of religious difference; when national education shall have attained that generous breadth which ecclesiastical exclusiveness or denominational timidity has hitherto prevented; then it will be seen who, in this time of conflict, loved most wisely the rising generation of England.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL NOTES.

THE Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol has delivered an address containing some startling statements to working men at Bristol. The bishop began by denying that the Church was losing her hold upon this class of the community, and then proceeded to ask, like Mr. Codlin, who was the poor man's friend in distress, in sickness, and in suffering but the clergyman? He maintained, also, that the clergy were not indifferent to the social needs of the working classes, and that although they could not interfere in questions relating to capital and labour, they prevented as far as in them lay, oppression and hard dealing. So, he judged, for these and other reasons, that the Church stood well with all classes, but especially well with the working men. He admitted the faults of past generations, but none of those faults existed now. Then, the bishop frankly told the working men of their own faults, amongst which he noticed an increasing indifference on the subject of religion, and a tendency to materialism and intemperance.

One of course asks himself, on reading this address, why the bishop should have treated his subject in the manner we have described? How is it that an impression has gone abroad that the Church is losing her hold on working men—that she is not very friendly to their interests? There is a general impression to that effect, and we do not see that the bishop's denial of its accuracy makes it inaccurate. Who have the best means of forming a correct judgment on this point—the working men themselves and the public generally, or the bishop? Then, notice the bishop's manner of reply to the question he has asked. What has all that he has to say to do with the Church as established? Supposing the clergy to have been and to be all that he describes, would they not have been, and would they not be, the same had they not been established? It is a case of the temperament and character of men, and not of their relation to the State. The strangest statement, however, comes at the close of the address. The bishop charges the working men with an increasing indifference to religion, and yet he says the Church is not losing her hold upon them. Does he mean to intimate that it is not necessary to be religious in order to be a good Churchman? What sort of hold can the Church have when indifference to religion is increasing?

The *Times* has a very candid article upon the bishop's address. It remarks that the bishop did not venture to say that the Church is gaining ground. The *Times* proceeds:—

In fact, whether it be that the Church has dropped behind the times, or that the population has grown too fast for her, the evidence of episcopal charges, clerical meetings, and the testimony of all who have personal experience of the life of working men, abundantly explain Dr. Ellicott's meditations. It needs a sanguine Churchman to believe that in London, for instance, the worship and the doctrines of the Church of England hold any commanding position in the thoughts and tendencies of the working classes. They are not, as a rule, church-goers, and it scarcely mends the matter if they absent themselves from chapel also.

We rarely, the leading journal adds, hear of working men looking for much help from the Church.

This is scarcely a satisfactory result from the influence of a vast Establishment, an historic institution, claiming to fix its roots in apostolic soil, and to have grown with the growth of the English nation. The Church was, no doubt, identified for many hundred years with all our national movements, and it has moulded the thoughts of generation after generation to an extent scarcely capable of exaggeration. But it has long been anxiously observed that this co-ordinate growth is interrupted, and that large masses of the working class seem, as it were, to have taken a new departure in thought and feeling, and to find little which responds to their aims and their principles in the Church of England.

Then, listen to this—

After all, the bishop admits a failure, and leaves the reason unassigned. He goes on to speak of the shortcomings of the working men, and says "he fears that indifference on the subject of religion is slowly stealing in among them." This is the very apprehension which, as we have pointed out, underlies the apparent complacency of the bishop's speech, and in failing to meet it directly he has, we fear, neglected the very essence of his subject. He betrays an error only too common among the clergy, that their influence and that of their Church can be maintained by mere kindly offices, by charitable exertions, by "warm words at the corners of streets," by a genial impartiality, bright services, open sittings, and good singing. Kind words can be obtained without a great Ecclesiastical Establishment and even religious people may be supplied with open churches and musical services without being specially attached to the Anglican communion. Institutions are not founded on mere feelings, nor are the mass of men governed by tastes. Indeed, the less artificial they are, the more directly are they disposed to look below the surface, and to ask of any man or body of men who appeal to them what substantial answer they can give to their doubts, what solid satisfaction they can afford to the necessities of their nature. The task of the bishop should begin where he ended. If the working classes are indifferent to religion, they will certainly



not be earnest adherents of any Church. Episcopal and clerical addresses would be more to the point if they were more directly addressed to this vital defect. As soon as the working classes care for religion itself, they may then begin to consider whether the special form of religion which the Church of England offers them be specially suited to their hearts and thoughts as Englishmen. But till this is done, all the minor excellencies to which the bishop appeals are in a great measure thrown away.

Reading all which, one may come to the conclusion that the bishop's address has only made the estrangement of the working classes from the Church more patent than ever.

A late State-framed prayer, on the occasion, a few years ago, of some fast, excited some amusing criticism, but the last authenticated prayer and thanksgiving have been received with equal severity. Prayer by telegraph does not yet seem particularly fit, and it happened that the telegraph did not reach everywhere, and so some people could not pray in time. A like misfortune seems to have happened to the form of thanksgiving, which, not reaching some of the clergy on the day it was ordered to be read, could not be used at all. But doesn't everybody know that all these Privy Council prayers are utterly illegal, and that those who use them in parish churches (Dissenters can use them) are liable to be prosecuted for a misdemeanour? This is brought out in a magistrate's letter to the *Guardian*. The magistrate writes:—

It is surely a most sad and a most humiliating commentary on the intolerable confusion and miserable condition in which our national law touching matters ecclesiastical is at this time involved, to affirm what is unequivocally the fact, that as regards England the five Privy Counsellors, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Lord Chancellor, on whose behalf the order above mentioned was signed by Mr. "A. Helps," have committed the offence of exciting to a misdemeanour at common law. For it is irrefutably true that to use "any form or order" of common prayer, in the public service of the Church of England, "other than what is prescribed and appointed to be used in and by" the Book of Common Prayer, is a misdemeanour at common law, by 13 & 14 Car. II., c. iv., sec. 17. It would be, of course, superfluous to dilate on the fact that, in the case of an Act of Parliament, no dispensive power (unless specially given) resides anywhere or in any authority, civil or ecclesiastical.

A correspondent sends us the following letter:—

To the Editor of the *Nonconformist*.

Dear Sir,—Will you be so good as to say in an early number whether a clergyman can legally refuse to read the Burial Service at the funeral of a child or adult who has been baptised by a Wesleyan or Nonconformist minister? My own impression is that baptism is valid by whomsoever administered.

I am, my dear sir,

Yours truly, W.

"W." is quite right. All baptism is legal and is recognised as such by the Church. A clergyman who should refuse to bury, under the circumstances narrated, could be successfully prosecuted.

On the last day of the Manchester Conference attention was called to the Scottish education question. It was stated that the Government would make this a test question, and that it hoped to get a verdict from Parliament in favour of denominational education by means of that measure. By the Scotch Bill, school boards are to adopt what religious teaching they please. Of course the Nonconformist party will oppose any such measure, and the *Scotsman* already justifies them in their intended opposition. It says that it is neither unfair nor unwise, and that there is really more obligation to resist the Scotch Bill than to repeal the English one:—

The Scotch Bill proceeds on the same principle and plan as the English; and it would be preposterous to ask Parliament to undo in England what it was at the very time proceeding to do in Scotland. Farther, the Scotch Bill, in reference to such matters as time-tables and the use of ecclesiastical formulas, is, or apparently is to be, an aggravation of the English Act. On the whole, therefore, the opponents of the sectarianising portions of the English Act can plead not only good policy, but a sort of necessity, for their design of fighting the English battle on Scotch ground. And whilst it will be an advantage to them, we regard it as no disadvantage, but as an advantage to us. The English battle involves the same issues as the Scotch, and it is well for us, especially in presence of that faint-heartedness or defection on the part of our Scotch Dissenters, touched upon with such effective sarcasm in some of the Manchester speeches, that the English national-educationists find that to help us is the best way of helping themselves.

Finally, says our once Whig contemporary, it is desirable "to convince a Ministry not fossilised or Forsterised in its opinions, or rather suppositions, that it might be well to try for Scotland a measure upon the one plan which has not already been tried and defeated."

THE ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT.—In reply to a question from the Dissenters of Finedon, Northamptonshire, the Charity Commissioners state that school-managers are bound by the Endowed Schools Act to provide accommodation for scholars not communicating with the Established Church. The question was prompted by the parish clergyman instructing all children in Church doctrine.

## THE NONCONFORMIST CONFERENCE AT MANCHESTER.

### THE DELEGATES.

It is, of course, impossible for us to give a list of the delegates present at this numerously-attended conference. We need hardly say that the Congregational and Baptist denominations were strongly represented. So also were the Unitarians and the United Free Methodists. There were a considerable number of delegates for Wales, many of them being sent by Calvinistic Methodists. The Primitive Methodists also were well represented, and a few Presbyterians were present. A great many of the persons who attended represented county unions, local branches of the National Education League and the Liberation Society; and a still larger number the Nonconformist committees, which have been formed in various towns. The following imperfect selection of names will give some idea of the component parts of this great conference:—

#### MINISTERS.

J. Aldis, Hitchin; Dr. Allon, Islington; J. B. Allcott, Nottingham; Professor Anthony, M.A., Plymouth; T. Arnold, Northampton; G. S. Barrett, Norwich; R. Best, Bolton; L. D. Bevan, London; W. Binns, Berkenhead; A. J. Bray, Manchester; J. J. Brown, Birmingham; J. Byles, Blackburn; A. H. Byles, Headingley; D. Charles, Cardiganshire; R. Chew, P. W. Clayden; W. F. Clarkson, Lincolnshire; C. Clemance, B.A., Nottingham; E. R. Conder, M.A., Leeds; D. R. Cowan, Saltaire; T. D. Crother, Sheffield; H. W. Crosskey, Birmingham; Dr. Croft, Hulme; G. D. Cullen, Scotland; J. Curwen, Stratford; P. W. Darnton, Chester; D. Davies, B.A., Herts; Bryan Dale, M.A., Halifax; R. W. Dale, M.A., Birmingham; T. W. Davids, Colchester; H. Dowson; J. S. Eastmead, Wakefield; Dr. Evans, Shropshire; W. Evans, Pembroke; Owen Evans, Montgomery; Jno. Fernie, Burslem; F. C. Finlayson, Rusholme; Jno. Fletcher, Christchurch; T. Gasquoine, Oswestry; W. Gaskell, Manchester; J. C. Gallaway, M.A., London; J. P. Gledstone, Sheffield; A. Gordon, M.A., Liverpool; Dr. Gordon, Walsal; G. Gould, Norwich; Thos. Green, Ashton; W. Griffith, Derby; W. Guest, Gravesend; J. Guthrie, Glasgow; R. Harley, Leicester; D. J. Hamer, Salford; S. B. Handley, Stafford; R. Hamilton, Brighton; A. Hannay, London; W. W. Harry, Knutsford; G. J. Hartland, Bristol; W. Hewgill, M.A., Farnworth; W. H. Herford, B.A.; A. Holborn, Huyton; T. G. Horton, Wolverhampton; G. W. Humphreys, Wellington; G. P. Jarvis, Limerick; Griffith John, Aberystwith; G. B. Johnson, Birmingham; F. Sonley Johnstone, Merthyr; Dr. Landels, London; T. Lloyd, Hitchin; J. A. Macfadyen, Manchester; R. P. Macmaster, Bristol; A. Mackennal, Leicester; Dr. Macleod, Birkenhead; D. March, Stoke; J. Massie, M.A., Spring-hill; J. Matheson, B.A., Nottingham; J. M. McKerrrow, B.A.; J. G. Miall, Bradford; Dr. Enoch Mellor, Halifax; Marmaduke Miller; Professor Morgan, Carmarthen; G. M. Murphy, London; John Myers; A. McLaren, Manchester; W. H. Parkinson, Rochdale; J. B. Paton, Nottingham; S. Pearson, Liverpool; J. Pillans, London; R. V. Pryce, Worcester; Dr. Raleigh, London; Andrew Reed, St. Leonard's; Dr. Rees, Swansea; C. E. B. Reed, Warminster; Dr. Rees, Liverpool; J. G. Rogers, Clapham; H. T. Robjohns, B.A., Newcastle; D. Russell, Glasgow; R. W. Squier; W. M. Statham, Hull; J. Stroyan, Burnley; W. R. Stevenson, M.A., Nottingham; H. Tarrant, Sheffield; J. R. Thomson, Tonbridge; A. Thompson, M.A., Manchester; W. Toller, Kettering; Dr. Waddington, London; Charles Williams, Accrington; A. Wilson, B.A., Stockport; W. A. Wrigley, Carlisle, &c., &c.

#### LAYMEN.

G. Anderson, Leicester; Messrs. Armitage, Manchester; R. S. Ashton, Darwen; J. Ashworth, Rochdale; W. Baines, Leicester; G. Baines, Leicester; T. G. Bantock, Wolverhampton; T. Barnes, Shropshire; J. Benham, London; A. Boyd, Cheshire; S. Boothroyd, Southport; J. C. Bowser, London; Bateman Brown, Huntingdon; J. Briggs, Wakefield; A. Buckley, Oldham; S. Carryer, Burslem; J. Chamberlain, Birmingham; C. Cheetham, J.P., Heywood; A. Common, J.P., Sunderland; Jesse Collings, Birmingham; R. Cory, Cardiff; Jas. Coombs, M.A., Bedford; Jos. Cowen, jun., Newcastle; Jos. Craven, Clapham; W. Crossfield, Liverpool; R. J. Davies, J.P., Cardiganshire; R. R. Duncley; H. R. Ellington, London; W. M. Fawcett; W. Fielden, Bowdon; B. Frith, Heckmondwike; Thomas Gee, Denbighshire; John Gibb, Eccles; N. Goodman, St. Ives; E. Grimwade, Ipswich; F. J. Hartley, London; H. M. Heath, Hackney; W. Henzell, Newcastle; E. Helen, Manchester; J. Hirst, Oldham; W. Horrocks, Stand; Angus Holden, Bradford; Councillor Hodgkinson, Rusholme; G. Hope, Edinburgh; W. Hudson, Birmingham; C. Hughes, J.P.; A. Haworth, Manchester; Stanway Jackson, Manchester; Captain Jones, Llanelli; J. Kingsley, Manchester; R. Kell, Bradford; J. A. Kendrick, Birmingham; G. Knott,

Ashton; W. H. Lee, Manchester; H. C. Leonard; John Leese; G. Mander, Wolverhampton; J. S. Manton, Birmingham; Hugh Mason, Ashton; A. M'Doughall, Penrith; M. Medwin, Lambeth; Wright Mellor, Halifax; W. Morgan, Birmingham; Sydney Morris, Bowdon; Thomas Nicholson, Plymouth; Oliver Ormerod, Rochdale; G. Osborn, Bradford; J. Petrie, jun., Rochdale; P. P. Perry, J.P., Northampton; Alderman Phillips, Swansea; J. A. Picton, F.S.A., Liverpool; Thos. Pidduck, Hahley; R. Pilkington, St. Helens; W. Piper, Ipswich; J. Priestman, Bradford; Titus Salt, Saltaire; F. Schnadhorst, Birmingham; R. Sinclair, London; D. Smith, Warrington; J. W. Pye-Smith, Sheffield; Jas. Sidebottom, Manchester; T. Snape, Liverpool; A. Spicer, London; J. Stafford, Leicester; J. J. and S. Stitt, Liverpool; M. B. Sutton, London; J. Templeton, London; Dr. Underhill, London; Henry Vincent, London; W. Warburton, Salford; L. Whittaker, J.P., Leicester; E. S. Wiles, St. Albans; Professor Wilkins, Manchester; W. H. Willans, Highbury; E. W. Winterbotham, Stroud; J. J. Wright, Birmingham, &c., &c.

### WEDNESDAY MORNING.

The sittings of this conference, which was inaugurated at the great meeting in the Free Trade Hall on Tuesday night, were commenced on Wednesday morning in the Friends' Meeting House, in Mount-street. The attendance was very large. The general public were admitted to the galleries, and the body of the chapel was reserved for delegates. There were representatives present from every part of the kingdom, and their number was estimated at about 1,900.

Before the proper business of the meeting was proceeded with,

Mr. RICHARD JOHNSON, of Manchester, moved that a congratulatory address be presented to Her Majesty upon the restoration of the Prince of Wales to health. He said that for more than thirty years the Queen had filled the foremost place in the hearts and affections of her subjects, and while she had scrupulously discharged the duties of her supreme office, she had never once forgotten the moderation and self-restraint which became a constitutional monarch. (Cheers.) Loyal gratitude was due to her for the political service she had rendered to her people, but not less for the moral good she had wrought by the silent force of her own simple and virtuous manners. Might she reign in prosperity for many years to come; and when the prince succeeded to his inheritance, might he follow in his mother's steps, and reap the same bountiful harvest of a nation's love. ("Hear," and cheers.) That meeting represented the Nonconformist Churches of England in a sense and in a degree that no other assembly had hitherto done, and it was of the utmost moment for the grave question in hand they should strive to show themselves worthy of the simple, serious, God-fearing men and women of whom they were the delegates. (Cheers.) In their great campaign against ecclesiastical injustice they had numerous and powerful allies, whose aid they had accepted, although their spirit and their aims were not wholly the same as theirs. Even within the circle of the Established Church itself the cause of religious equality received an increasing measure of sympathy and support. But, after all, their chief hope of victory must arise from the determined efforts of the Nonconformists themselves. All things animated them to a decisive struggle. With their adversaries no terms of peace could be made. Although their leaders constantly and publicly acknowledged that their ultimate defeat was not far distant, still they would not let them alone or refrain from aggression. Thanks to the men of Birmingham—to Mr. Dixon, Mr. Dale, Mr. Crosskey, and their associates, and others—it was seen at length that, under colour of the recent Education Act, a large additional endowment had been conferred upon the Established Church, and that the ecclesiastics of England had gained more than was ever lost by their brethren in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) The discussions of the last six months had revealed their own strength. If they were as resolved and as earnest as their fathers were, no Liberal Administration dare ask, for very shame, their support in dealing with petty questions of the hour while their great wrong continued unredressed. They had in the House of Commons many able and loyal leaders. Above all, they had in the person of Mr. Miall a statesman who, for power of lucid statement, for temper, for policy, for disinterestedness, was inferior to no living Englishman; who, if they were true to him, would lead them to victory; and who, after victory, would, he trusted, find in the veneration and love of his countrymen the reward due to those who make brethren to dwell together in unity. (Cheers.) Unity of feeling was the first condition of national safety and national happiness. Unhappy France had suffered mainly because hers was a divided people. And the perils of division had begun to appear among us also. Would to God that the rankest root of bitterness, the most dangerous stumbling-block of religious privilege and religious inequality, was at length cast out from amongst us, and that in public life we no longer stood face to face, Churchman against Dissenter and Dissenter



against Churchman, but side by side, Christians and Englishmen! (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. ALEXANDER THOMSON then read the following address, which had been prepared by the executive committee:—

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.

May it please your Majesty,—We, the delegates and representatives of Protestant Nonconforming Churches and associations in different parts of the United Kingdom, now assembled in Manchester, desire to approach your Majesty with feelings of the deepest loyalty and affection. We would most respectfully offer to your Majesty the assurance of our heartfelt sympathy in the prolonged and distressing anxieties which have been felt by your Majesty, by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, and all the other members of your Majesty's family during the painful and alarming illness with which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has recently been afflicted. In common with the rest of your Majesty's subjects, our fervent prayers have not ceased to be offered to Almighty God for the preservation and recovery of his royal highness, and for the support and comfort of your Majesty and of her royal highness the princess during the continuance of the trial. We now thankfully acknowledge the Divine mercy which has interposed to spare the life of his royal highness when in imminent peril, and to grant him a measure of recovery; and we earnestly pray that his royal highness may speedily be restored to complete health, and may be preserved to be the object of a loyal people's hope and affectionate esteem.

That your Majesty may enjoy for many years to come the choicest tokens of the Divine goodness, and that your Majesty's reign—which has been so signally productive of blessings to all classes of your people, through adherence to the true principles of national progress—may continue to be brightened with the sunshine of peace and prosperity, is the constant prayer of your Majesty's most dutiful and loving subjects, the Protestant Nonconformists of the United Kingdom.

The address was adopted with acclamation, and Mr. Richard Johnson then resigned the chair.

MR. MIALL'S ADDRESS.

Mr. EDWARD MIALL, M.P., the appointed president of the morning, then took the chair, and on rising was greeted with oft-repeated cheers. He said: Gentlemen of the Conference, after the exceedingly appropriate and elegant words of the chairman who preceded me respecting the illness of the Prince of Wales, and after the memorial which you have adopted to Her Majesty, it will be superfluous for me to advert to that subject as I had intended. I can only say that in your name I am sure I may say, God be thanked that the Prince of Wales's life has been spared—(Hear, hear)—and may breathe forth the prayer that he may have been spared for great good to the people of these realms. (Hear, hear.) We have come together, gentlemen, as Nonconformists it is true, but not as having any special interests but the interests of our country to promote. (Hear, hear.) We shall have to discuss many matters, some of principle and some of detail, arising out of the working of the Endowed Schools Act, and out of the Elementary Education Act of 1870, and the mode of its administration since it became law. We shall be charged with impatience for not having given the latter Act a fair trial; we shall be told that the education of the people of this country is of such paramount importance, and is so imperatively required for the sake of national progress, liberty, and good order, that the objections we have taken or may take to some of the methods resorted to by the existing law for this purpose dwindle into insignificance in comparison with the main object of the Act. And it may be that, looked at singly and apart, every one of the proceedings which we deem to be a violation of our principles might, for the sake of the great practical work in hand, be submitted to, though with reluctance. But, gentlemen, I conceive that it is not from the mischiefs separately considered which these unjust and impolitic provisions and proceedings may inflict upon Nonconformity, or, as we think, upon elementary education itself—(Hear, hear)—that we draw our chief motives for assembling in such numbers here today. It is because in faithfulness to our settled convictions, and in the discharge of the responsibilities which arise out of them, because in love to our country, or in earnest concern for its future character and destiny, we cannot stand by and silently witness the employment of the organised authority of law and of Government in handing over the minds of the children, and the great majority of our fellow-subjects, to the formative influence of any priesthood whatever, be it Anglican or be it Roman. (Applause.) This, however, though not perhaps in intention, yet in effect, is the true meaning of denominational education. It is embodied in the Elementary Education Act; it has been strengthened by the Revised Code; it has been emphasised by the action of the Education Department. We have to breast the current which is bearing this nation backward towards priestly supremacy. The Nonconformists have done so before in the course of their history, and at the expense of not a little which they hold dear, in evil report as in good report, in dishonour as well as in honour, in weakness as well as in power. They will do so again—(cheers)—and, cost what it may to them in feeling or in favour or in position, they will not abandon the ground towards which insidious and hostile approaches are being made under cover of zeal for a nominal but unreal religious equality. Well, but we are admonished that "it is too soon to reopen a compromise so recently agreed to by all parties." (Laughter.) A compromise, forsooth! Who negotiated it? Who concluded it? (Hear, hear.) Who bound themselves by it? (Hear, hear.) Not the Nonconformists—(applause)—so far

as I know, at least. What steps were taken to consult their views? (Hear, hear.) What heed was paid to their protests? Who gave to any Minister in the Cabinet, or out of it, authority to represent them in effecting that series of transactions the upshot of which has been, in all that relates to popular education, to leave them out in the cold? No, gentlemen; let it be fully understood that we are perfectly free from any self-imposed restrictions, but those of patriotism, of wisdom, and of conscience. There has been no compromise. (Hear, hear.) There is none. (Hear, hear.) There has been a cession of our claims, but not by us. We have been delivered over into the hands of ecclesiastical monopolists, but not with our own consent. (Applause.) Gentlemen, it does not become Nonconformists to boast beyond their measure for what has happened in this educational controversy; they must take some share of the blame. (Hear, hear.) In the critical moment they faltered in the distinct and unequivocal assertion of their principles, and, like Samson when his tresses were shorn, they lost their strength. It is more manly because more candid to confess than to conceal it, and I think I should be justified in saying that we were all taken somewhat unawares. Amid the confusion of party cries, unable at the moment to discriminate clearly between our religious principles and our religious sentiment, and prompted by instincts which were true enough in themselves, but not wisely directed, we were for a time bewildered, and lost sight of our only tenable position, namely, that when the State, which comprises all members of the community, undertakes to apply taxation, whether by Parliamentary grant or by local rate, or Parliamentary authority, direct or indirect, to the purpose of religious teaching, it trespasses beyond its legitimate province, takes upon itself responsibilities which it has not suitable qualifications to discharge, and subjects itself to the alternative of pursuing but ineffectually pursuing, religious equality by concurrent and proportionate subsidies to all religious faiths and opinions, or by selecting one or more from amongst many for support and favour. Upon this clear principle we must take our stand if we mean to achieve a satisfactory and permanent settlement of the question of national education—a united literary education by the State, separate religious education by parents or by the voluntary agency of religious communities. (Applause.) If we have the courage of our convictions we are bound to enunciate as distinctly as possible this broad, intelligible position. We shall then hold the base of operations from which we shall be able to carry on the contest with all the advantage which the case will admit of. Nor will it be so imperative upon us to press for the immediate and simultaneous application of our principle to every one of the instances in which it is now violated. As to the when, the how, and the how much, we may reserve to ourselves liberty both of judgment and of action. Our strategy and tactics may fairly be conformed, from time to time, to the conditions under which the struggle must be carried on. We cannot be expected to do at once all that we are resolved to do whenever we can. We have a right, however, to demand, and it may be found expedient and wise to demand now, at this time, that the retrospective steps by which legislation, at the instance of what we think a friendly Government, has increased the distance between us and religious equality in educational matters, shall be retraced as early as may be. (Loud applause.) This would seem to be about the least we could insist upon. We may not get it immediately. We may have to exhaust the penalty entailed upon us by the confusion and division of opinion which the premature introduction of Mr. Forster's measure in 1870 occasioned amongst us. It was possible for the Nonconformists, and, I may add, for the great majority of the working men—newly enfranchised classes—to be ridden down without warning by our allies, and surrendered by our leaders into the hands of our opponents. It is not to be wondered at that we were, for the time being, distracted by so unexpected an occurrence; but it does seem strange that they who did this thing did not bear in mind that it is not thus that Nonconformists can be dragged into a final abandonment of the ground they have so long occupied. (Applause.) We are patient, it is true; but many a chapter of history has shown that we are also persistent to the end. (Applause.) When we are *bona fide* consulted we are disposed to be accommodating—perhaps too accommodating. (Hear, hear.) But neither our glorious traditions, or past triumphs, or our present position will allow us to sit down tamely under high-handed arrangements, by which we have been coolly victimised. This conference, I trust, will do nothing inconsiderate, nothing rash, nothing wherein passion should predominate over judgment; but there is one thing, I trust, it will do—it will vindicate the moral dignity of the Nonconformist bodies—(applause)—and will give a pledge to the world that, when the fitting time arrives, Dissenters will not shrink from marching to the field of electoral conflict in one unbroken, orderly, and solemn array, under the flag of religious equality—(loud applause)—regardless of the consequences either to themselves or to those who might have led them forward to fresh victories in behalf of complete freedom of conscience, but who preferred to go over to the camp of our Conservative and clerical antagonists. Now, should the wide difference between us and our former political allies be unhappily pushed to disruption, it ought, in bare justice to Nonconformists, to be borne in mind

that neither the cause nor the issue of it has been of their seeking. (Hear, hear.) Their loyalty to the party with which they have been associated is not to be impeached. It is not they who have strained the ties of union by imposing new imperative conditions upon their old friends. (Hear, hear.) If those ties are eventually snapped asunder, it will be owing to the fact that they have been abruptly used to drag us back to a position we long since left behind us. We cannot again submit to the legal subjection of any of our great national interests to sacerdotal ascendancy. Those who attempt, and who doggedly persist in the attempt, to make us do so, must accept the responsibility of what they do. It is they, not we, that have sowed discord in the ranks of Liberalism; it is they, not we, whom history will either blame or applaud should discord ripen into division. But, gentlemen, let us cherish a hope, faint though it may be, that Mr. Gladstone will yet find or adopt some scheme of conciliation which shall be no less satisfactory to us than honourable to himself. (Applause.) Such a scheme, according to my humble judgment, has within the last few days been submitted to the public by the National Education League. (Applause.) It is not my business, of course, to expound it; no doubt it will be expounded by some member of that body before the conference finally separates. It has struck my mind, however, as offering the completest, the fairest, the most permanent, and the most feasible solution of the ecclesiastical difficulty in the settlement of the educational question. (Hear, hear.) But be that as it may, we have a right to look to the head of Her Majesty's Government to lift the question out of its present position—a position which has everywhere rekindled and intensified the flames of religious animosity, and which threatens to become as great a social mischief as it is and cannot but be disastrous to the cause of national elementary education. And, gentlemen, let us not forget that after all this last is the matter which should give us most concern. Till we can succeed in detaching the education of the youthful mind of this country from priestly intolerance and sectarian strife, we may be sure that the results of our educational efforts, even when backed by the whole power of the State, will be comparatively worthless—religiously speaking, worse than useless. That Nonconformists may do their part towards effecting the separation of the precious from the vile, and may hand down national institutions for the instruction of the children of the poor to a remote posterity as a rich legacy won by their fidelity to principle, their courage, and their self-denial, is not, I trust, too fond or too selfish a wish for any of us to entertain. Gentlemen, let that wish inspire our souls whilst we remain together in this conference, and, with God's blessing, some worthy advance will be made towards such an assured certainty that it will be ultimately and fully realised. (Loud cheers.)

#### RELIGIOUS EQUALITY IN THE UNIVERSITIES.

Professor WILKINS read a paper on "Religious Equality in the National Universities." After an introductory sentence or two, he said:—

What need is there to raise again before a conference like the present the well-worn question of religious equality at the Universities. Now no one can deny that real and momentous advantages have already been secured. Anyone, whatever his religious opinions, may now enter at any of the Oxford or Cambridge colleges; he is free to compete during his undergraduate career for all the University and college prizes, exhibitions, and scholarships; unless he declares himself a member of the Church of England, he cannot be compelled to attend the college service; and when he has taken his degree, he is eligible not only for a fellowship, but also for the higher honour of serving his college as tutor or lecturer. Nowhere in his course can his conscientious scruples to accept dogmatic tests stand in the way of his enjoyment of all the advantages to which his merits entitle him. Henceforward, with the limitations that are immediately to be noted, every Englishman may wear all that he has brains to win. And if it had been only the advantage of individuals to which the long-continued struggle of the Liberal party with sectarian exclusiveness had been directed, I think it would be well for us to rest content with what has already been secured. But we have been contending, not for emolument, but for principle. (Hear, hear.) It is comparatively a little thing that four or five men of proved ability should be annually excluded by ecclesiastical tests from positions of honour and advantage. It is a matter of vast importance that no religious body whatever should have entrusted to it an undue share in the higher education of the nation. (Cheers.) This and nothing less has been the object of the struggles of the friends of religious equality, both in and out of the Church. But how can this be said to be effected so long as it is deliberately enacted that the great majority of colleges shall have as their head a clergyman of the Established Church, that bishops of that Church shall in many cases continue to wield the absolute and irresponsible powers of the visitor, and that clergy of that Church shall have important privileges over all others as regards the tenure of fellowships? These are the inequalities which yet remain, and to each of them I propose very briefly to call your attention. A word or two may be expedient as to the history of the retention of these injustices.

Various excuses were made for the exclusion of clerical fellowships and headships from the bill; the Premier, for instance, pleading the complexity of this question, and when Mr. Fawcett urged their abolition, he was supported by 160 members and defeated only by twenty-two votes. But in this majority not less than twenty-five members of



the Government voted—(Hear, hear)—and several Nonconformists like Mr. Samuel Morley and Sir Francis Goldsmid followed the lead of Mr. Gladstone. (Oh, oh!) Had the Government simply been neutral in the matter, it cannot be doubted they would have been freed a year ago from what the *Times* on the day after the division justly called "the oppression and the scandal of compulsory orders at the Universities." (Cheers.) It was not possible to make any general statement as to the tenure of a fellowship, because the conditions varied greatly in the different colleges. At two colleges at Oxford and two at Cambridge there was no obligation upon any of the fellows to take holy orders. In these therefore, and in these alone, a Nonconformist was on an absolute equality with a Churchman—

But in all the other colleges, composing of course the great majority at both the Universities, there are terms of tenure which fall under one of the two following classes: either a certain proportion of the fellows are obliged to be in holy orders, or every fellow is bound to be ordained after holding his fellowship for a certain number of years. As an instance of the former class we may take Clare College, Cambridge, where out of the whole number of fellows one third are required to be in holy orders; if at any election less than one-third of the fellows are in holy orders, and if this has been the case for six months previous to the election, no person can be elected fellow who is not in holy orders. Regulations fundamentally similar are in force at nine other Cambridge colleges, and at fourteen of the colleges at Oxford. In some cases one-third of the fellowships, in others half, in others two-thirds, or even more, are confined to the clergy of the Established Church. It is needless for me to say a word on the injury that these regulations continue to inflict not only on Nonconformists, but also upon the lay members of the Church of England. The growing disinclination among men of high University distinction to enter the clerical profession is a matter of notoriety. Even under the old exclusive system the statutory number of lay fellows was habitually reached; and at Oxford especially it was well known that the colleges had to be frequently content with inferior candidates when the condition of holy orders was imposed. When Lord Rosebery called attention to this well-known fact in the House of Lords, the Marquis of Salisbury thought it becoming to taunt him with having drawn his statement from the vulgar gossip of the college scouts. At the time when the Marquis of Salisbury indulged in this unworthy insult, he had before him the evidence of one of the most distinguished members of the University of Oxford (Mr. C. S. Roundell), who had stated the same fact on the authority of his own repeated experience. In my own year at Cambridge, the first class of the classical tripos included the names of eighteen graduates. Of these I know that thirteen declined to enter holy orders, and I believe that the same is the case with three of the remaining five. The influx of Dissenters of course increases the competition for the fellowships whose tenure is not trammelled; and in the twenty-four colleges that fall into the class of which I am speaking, the retention of the clerical test practically means that all but the clergy of the Established Church are to be excluded from very nearly one-half of the crowning prizes of a student's life. The exact numbers are—181 fellowships confined to clergymen of the Established Church, 199 open to unrestricted competition. It must further be borne in mind that, while a layman cannot possibly hold a clerical fellowship, in the vast majority of instances there is nothing to prevent the tenure of an open fellowship by a clergyman. It follows, then, while 380 fellowships are offered in the four and twenty colleges to the members of a small minority of students, hardly 200 are open to the competition of the great majority.

The unfairness of the working of the present system came out still more plainly when they considered what gave its value to a fellowship:—

The position of a fellow is one of emolument, but it is also one of high distinction. In the case of those who have been hitherto excluded it is not the loss of 200*l.* or 300*l.* a year which they feel the most keenly; it is that after a successful university career they have been refused the official recognition of their attainments. The hall-mark of scholarship has been denied them. (Hear, hear.) And this injustice, though lessened, is still continued. A fellowship ought to be regarded as a sign of first-class scholarship. At present its acquirement means either that a man has taken first-class honours, or that, being a second, or even a third rate man, he is willing to be ordained in the Church of England. (Hear, hear.) A third class of colleges consists of those where it is provided, not that any definite proportion of the fellows should be in holy orders, but that all the fellows should be ordained after a certain number of years, unless they are actually holding some college office, or have held such office for at least ten years. This class is not so numerous as the preceding, but fifteen fellowships at Oxford and 139 at Cambridge are held upon this tenure. Now, here I confess that the laity have not such strong ground of complaint as in the former case. No one is excluded from a fair chance of a fellowship by his unwillingness to enter holy orders; and when a man has won his fellowship, he is able to hold it for eight or nine years, subject to no condition but the absurd one of celibacy. (Laughter.) In common, I believe, with all University reformers, I consider such a tenure enough, and more than enough, to be given purely as a prize for past achievements. But what I do wish to urge upon you very strongly is, that what is enough for one ought to be enough for all; that whether a man be a clergyman or whether he be a layman, it ought not to make the slightest difference to the value of the prize which he receives for intellectual attainments. (Cheers.) At present, in Trinity and St. John's, in Christ's, in Queen's and in Exeter, the college authorities declare to a student that, provided he attains a certain standard of excellence, he shall receive an annuity for eight or nine years if he remains a layman, for life if he becomes a clergyman, always supposing he remains unmarried. (Laughter.) It might be supposed that this provision was intended to retain the government of the colleges in the hands of the clergy, and I cannot doubt that this was the purpose originally

had in view. But because of the necessity of retaining for the colleges the services of distinguished tutors and lecturers who might decline to "resort to orders" (as the current phrase is), this regulation was relaxed in the case of resident working fellows. And thus it is now perfectly possible, though, for several reasons, very improbable, that the majority of the governing body in the case of the colleges I have mentioned should consist of laymen, or even of Nonconformists. As a measure of security to the Church this regulation is useless: it is efficacious only as a means of providing increased privilege and emolument for the clergy. But when it was proposed to abolish clerical fellowships Mr. Gladstone resisted the proposal; and the ground he took was this: It is inexpedient that sinecure fellowships should be tenable for life, but of great importance that vacancies should frequently occur for the benefit of the younger graduates. Now the prohibition of marriage and the requirement of holy orders do very effectually tend to shorten the tenure of fellowships and produce more numerous vacancies; and, therefore, in spite of the remonstrances of a majority of the Liberal party, these conditions were retained.

Admitting to the full the evil of a life-long tenure of a sinecure fellowship, they claimed that an impartial system of compulsory retirement should be substituted for an expedient which was at once unjust to the vast majority of the community and utterly useless to check the grossest cases of abuse. But another argument in defence of clerical fellowships deserved a moment's consideration. It was said that a large portion of the property of the colleges consisted of the advowsons of livings; and that these might be properly filled, it was expedient that the fellows of the colleges shall be themselves qualified to hold them.

Now, if we look to the highest interests of the parishioners, it cannot be doubted that they are greatly wronged by a system which puts the strongest pressure on a man to enter the work of the Christian ministry, however little he may feel himself fitted for it. In appointing to a living, the college has no power of selection; the benefice is offered, first to the senior fellow on the list, and, if he declines it, to the second, and so on in regular rotation until it is accepted. There must be of necessity occasional instances of most unsuitable appointments; but where the college has felt itself constrained to protest against the senior claimant, it has not ventured—for fear of legal proceedings—to refuse to grant the nomination. The cases are far more numerous where the incumbent of a college living is a man of unblemished character, but unhappily devoid of the quick sympathies and lofty inspirations that are needful for the Christian minister. As regards the colleges, the livings which they hold are justly regarded as very valuable means of pensioning those who have done good service in their earlier days. As long as the great majority of the college tutors and lecturers was composed of clergymen, this mode of assigning retiring allowances worked with a certain rude and imperfect kind of justice. But now that laymen are asserting with success their right to a full and proportionate share of the education of the country, this method is out of date. It provides an extravagant proportion of retiring pensions for those of the college officers who belong to the clergy of a section of the nation; it furnishes none whatever to anyone who stands outside this favoured number. The value of the patronage in the hands of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge is something enormous. At Cambridge the total annual income of the livings to which colleges present is stated by the official calendar at 128,000*l.*, and this is confessedly an under estimate. At Oxford, the value is reckoned by Mr. Lyulph Stanley at 200,000*l.* per annum. And it is to be further noticed that the operation of this system of patronage is harmful in a way which does not lie on the surface. Livings will be constantly falling vacant, to which only clerical fellows will be eligible; the acceptance of a living will in each case throw open another fellowship to restricted clerical competition, and the striking disproportion between the chances of a clergyman and a layman will be yet further increased. In presence of facts like these, we cannot wonder that University reformers have cast a longing eye upon the vast revenues of the college livings. The colleges have ceased to be corporations of Churchmen; when a similar change passed over the municipal corporations, it was provided by statute that the advowsons in municipal patronage should be disposed of, and the proceeds devoted to the general purposes of the boroughs. Why, it has been asked with no little force, should not a similar course be sanctioned in the case of the colleges? The sale of the advowsons, according to Mr. Stanley's calculations, would produce a sum little, if at all, short of 2,000,000*l.* sterling, that is to say, of 80,000*l.* per annum. This would supply abundantly all the retiring pensions needed for the superannuated tutors and lecturers, lay and clerical alike, and would probably leave a handsome surplus for other educational purposes. It is not easy to find any valid objection to the equity of proposals such as these. And yet I do not think that they are likely to find much acceptance from English Nonconformists. The sale of the cure of souls is fully recognised by the law of the Established Church, and one of the most vigorous defenders of the Establishment has of late been taking great pains to show, in opposition to the loved and honoured bishop of this diocese, that livings must be matters of open auction, so long as the Church is connected with the State. I believe it. But Nonconformists have ever protested against the scandal and the shame. (Cheers.) And rather than soil their fingers with the money that is gained by traffic in the souls of men, they will be willing to endure the inequalities that arise from a system of college patronage. (Renewed cheers.) For the evil is not likely to be of long endurance. (Hear, hear.) In the approaching disestablishment of the English Church—(loud cheers)—compensation will of course be given to all the holders of advowsons; and the sums of money that the colleges will receive in lieu of their rights of patronage will be at their free disposal, to promote in some more equitable fashion the interests of national education. (Cheers.)

Closely connected with the system of clerical fellowships was that of clerical headships. Of the forty-two headships of Oxford and Cambridge no less than thirty were of necessity confined to the

clergy, and of the twelve that are nominally open, the conditions of election were in several cases such that the election of a layman was practically impossible.

The majority of the House of Peers were not content with the security thus provided for the predominance of ecclesiastics. On the motion of the Marquis of Salisbury they added an amendment to the bill, enacting that the headships of colleges and halls should be open only to members of the Church of England. The Earl of Kimberley, speaking as a member of the Cabinet, declared that such a provision could only be regarded as an insult to Dissenters, and would not fail to bring about a lasting agitation to remove it; and, in accordance with this reasonable view, the influence of the Government in the House of Commons was exerted successfully to procure the rejection of the Lords' amendment. But if it be an insult to Dissenters calling for vigorous agitation that the headships of the colleges and halls are confined to members of the Church of England, what are we to call it if more than two-thirds of them are limited to clergymen of that Church? This is no sentimental grievance; it is the deliberate reassertion of a principle, against which we are gathered to protest, that the control of the education of the people, from the lowest to the highest, ought of right to be in the hands of the clergy of the State-Church. (Cheers.) The head of a college has, it is true, little to do with the actual work of education, but he has, to a large extent, the control of it. He appoints the tutors and lecturers, or has an important share in their appointment, and in a hundred ways exercises a very considerable influence. We do not grudge that this position and influence should be given to a Churchman, or even to a clergyman. But we do protest against the *a priori* assumption that such a one is of necessity the man best qualified for the post; and we claim that the electors should have full power to use the best of their judgment in selecting clergyman or layman, Churchman or Nonconformist, according to the requirements of the case. The direct results of the concession of equality would be little or nothing; it might be generations before a Nonconformist layman should be Master of Balliol or of Trinity. But what we have been aiming at is that the higher education of the nation shall be lifted altogether out of the lower region of petty sectarian jealousies and restrictions. (Cheers.) A measure was proposed to give them this character, which, it was hoped, would have this effect. After repeated failures, every failure involving new injustice, it was carried at last; and what do we find is the result? In thirteen out of the thirty-six colleges the Government is given over absolutely to the clergy of a diminishing section of the nation. The clerical head and clerical fellows must of necessity form a majority of the governing body. And in several of the remaining colleges such strong inducements are offered to the fellows to receive ordination that, though there is no necessity, there is the greatest probability that here, too, they will be so numerous as to have the power entirely in their own hands. (Hear, hear.)

Further, in many of the colleges an additional strength will be given to the clerical element by the support of the visitor—

In four of the Cambridge colleges the visitor is a bishop, in four more he is of necessity in holy orders. At Oxford, no less than fifteen colleges are under episcopal control. The powers of the visitor vary greatly in different cases, but in many instances he has an absolute veto on any change in the college statutes. His decision is final and without appeal in any question of the disputed meaning of an ordinance; and he is guided in giving his decision by no rule but that of his episcopal conscience. In what direction that conscience is likely to lead him is shown by the explicit declaration of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, that he regarded himself as the guardian of the interests of the Church; and need I say that "the interests of the Church" in such a connection are likely to be identified with the dominance of the clergy?

Since the date for which the meeting of that conference was originally fixed, a very important decision had been made by the highest judicial authority:—

After lengthened litigation, it has been decided that in eighteen of the Oxford colleges, the majority of the fellows, with the approval of the Privy Council, have the power to alter the college statutes, in spite of the veto of the visitor; and this power has been exercised by two of them to remove clerical restrictions. This is a very important step in advance, but it does not free us from the duty of urging their entire abolition. In a question of national importance, the decision ought not to be left in the hands of a small and irresponsible body, who, in the majority of cases, may be expected to be hostile to reform. It is either just or unjust that the special privileges of the clergy should be abolished; in neither case ought their retention to depend on the accident of the wishes of the bare majority of the present fellows. (Cheers.)

He would only add, in conclusion, what he conceived should be the demand of the friends of religious equality with regard to the universities:—

The precedent which we have to follow has been supplied to us by Mr. W. E. Forster in the seventeenth clause of the Endowed Schools Act. It is there enacted that in every scheme, with certain exceptions, relating to any educational endowment, the commissioners shall provide that the religious opinion of any person, or his attendance or non-attendance at any particular form of religious worship, shall not in any way affect his qualification for being one of the governing body of such endowment. And this is what we have a right to claim in the case of the endowments for the higher education of the nation, *mutatis mutandis*. One of the *mutanda* certainly must be the manner in which the provisions of an Act of Parliament are observed by those who are charged with its execution. Our claims are not exorbitant. An overwhelming majority of the Liberal party in the House of Commons has voted that they should be granted; and we cannot long endure that religious equality should be denied us by the Government whose primary claim on our allegiance was that in a crucial instance it pledged itself at every hazard to secure it. (Cheers.)

Mr. JAMES HEYWOOD, who was introduced by



the chairman as an old friend and fellow-worker, was the first speaker on this subject. He began by saying that he had great pleasure in seeing Mr. Miall at the head of this influential meeting of the Nonconformists of Great Britain. They had been members of the House of Commons together many years ago, and acted with great cordiality at that time, and he was rejoiced to see the distinguished place which Mr. Miall now held. He moved:—

That this conference pledges itself to support by all means in its power the measure to be submitted to Parliament next session, for the removal of the restrictions which confine many fellowships and headships of colleges to persons in, or intending to take, holy orders, and which confine other offices and emoluments connected with universities and colleges to members of the Church of England, and is of opinion that no settlement of the question at issue with regard to the national universities can be regarded as final and satisfactory which does not include the repeal of the regulations requiring the college authorities to provide religious instruction for the members of the Church of England and to cause the services of the Church of England to be read in the college chapels, and the transfer to the crown of the visitatorial powers now held *ex officio* by bishops of the Church of England.

After acknowledging the services rendered to the cause of university reform by Earl Russell, which would have been much greater but for the opposition which he constantly received at the hands of the House of Lords, he said that the House of Lords now stopped the way again. He did not think that the position of the question at the present day ought to be so much attributed to the Government of Mr. Gladstone as to the House of Lords. In his opinion, the position which the House of Lords had always taken up upon this question was that of stopping religious freedom—(cheers)—and Mr. Gladstone had hardly any choice or Mr. Forster either. What was wanted was a reform of the House of Lords by the creation of peers for life and by the representation of Nonconformists in the House of Lords. He should be glad to see Mr. Miall one of the peers. (Cheers, and cries of "No, no.") What he wanted was that the opinion of Nonconformists should be stated by some of themselves. He had great confidence in the loyalty of Mr. Gladstone to the Liberal party. They ought to make allowances for his position. He was not in favour of turning out the Government. He would scold it, and find fault with it, and insist that they should alter their line of policy, but he thought they ought to act loyally towards them. The resolution which he moved amounted simply to this, that the Church Establishment should not rule everything at Oxford and Cambridge. (Cheers.)

Mr. NEVILLE GOODMAN, M.A., seconded the resolution. He said they would find that nine out of every ten persons one met believed that, after the passing of the University Tests Act, Nonconformists had at the universities a fair field and no favour. They believed that tests were abolished, and that the universities were free from religious trammels. All that was perfectly false. (Hear, hear.) When they met such gentlemen they might take upon their lips the well-known words of Sir John Coleridge (who once had charge of a bill, the feeble predecessor of that one which had been passed), and would say, "Would you be surprised to learn"—(laughter)—that Nonconformists are debarred from nearly half the fellowships and nearly two-thirds of the headships by a barrier which is higher and stronger than any that had been thrown down? Would you be surprised to learn that while you thought you had abolished all tests, there remains behind a test far more detestable than any which has been got rid of? (Cheers.) Would you be surprised to learn that the colleges, and through them the universities, are at the present moment hopelessly and helplessly delivered over to the domination of the Anglican clergy for an unlimited period? All that was perfectly true, and he was prepared to prove it. Gentlemen did not need to be told that these clerical fellowships ought to be abolished. All the Liberal party (minus the Government) had voted against their continuance; and the Government itself, through the mouth of Mr. Gladstone, its spokesman, said it was discontented with the conditions on which fellowships were held. Mr. Gladstone himself had said that the question ought not to be allowed to sleep. But in the hush which had succeeded the conflict the question was already beginning to sleep, rocked by the cradle of a royal commission. They did not need a royal commission to tell them that those clerical fellowships were abominations, in whatever light they were looked upon. (Cheers.) He did not say a word against the holders of fellowships as clergymen, but they should remember that these particular clergymen were priests without pulpits. (Hear, hear.) They were gentlemen who were called in order that they might neglect their call. (Laughter and cheers.) He would ask anyone to put himself in the position of a fellow who, at the end of seven years, after attaining his M.A. degree, had the alternative put before him to enter the priesthood or be given over to poverty. (Hear, hear.) But there was a more serious side to the question, and that morning he had looked over the ordination service with which deacons and priests were inducted to orders, and he had thought to have placed before the meeting the solemn protests and calls made by the bishop, and the solemn words taken upon the lips of the respondent at ordination. But he had given up that idea, because he had found that in denouncing a blasphemy so great, he must become himself blasphemous. (Hear, hear.)

I feel strongly upon this subject, but not more strongly than I believe, and I say that I believe the arch-enemy of souls could not devise a better scheme for lowering the standard of morality in the nation and

for making religion contemptible in the eyes of a sensitive and chivalrous youth such as you send every year to the university. It is such a scheme as

From the body of contraction plucks  
The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
A rhapsody of words.

(Loud applause.)

Professor MASSIE supported the resolution. He said a very serious catastrophe was about to fall on the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge—serious, socially and politically. In the words of Professor Rawlinson, according to the dismal forebodings of his prophetic soul, there would soon be no possibility of distinction between Churchmen and Dissenters. (Laughter and cheers.) They might, however, take some consolation to themselves in the midst of this alarm if they reflected that a state of society, which did not disintegrate the body politic before 1662, might occur again in England without disastrous consequences. He was not so sanguine, however, as Professor Rawlinson, and he was sure that the object which the professor feared had not been secured by the partial and unsatisfactory abolition of tests, so long as the clerical fellowships absorbed by far the greater number of the prizes of learning, so long as professors of theology must be members of the Church of England, and so long as the services of the Church of England were used in the chapels of these colleges—so long, in point of fact, as the Church of England continued established. The unsettled spirits of the universities were fighting from within, and the Nonconformists must agitate from without, and it would not take long to batter down walls which were assailed from both sides. (Cheers.)

The Hon. LYULPH STANLEY wished to propose one or two practical points in connection with this question. By a side wind a great deal had been done, and a great deal was likely to be done, for abolishing clerical fellowships. Merton College had already abolished all clerical restrictions—(Hear, hear.)—and he had no doubt the example would be followed in five or six other Oxford colleges, and by degrees this movement would spread. But there was one matter of obstruction which the colleges could not deal with, and that was the episcopal visitor, who was a far more serious thing in many respects than a clerical fellow, for he was an integral part of the government of the college. A fellow might be out-voted, but the visitor stood alone, and could defeat any improvement. Therefore, it was most essential to insist on unsectarianising and undenominationalising these essential parts of the governing body of colleges. He did not know that he would go so far as to say that the visitor should be the Crown. What he would say was, that the visitor should not be a visitor of any particular Church. (Hear, hear.) He regretted that Mr. Gladstone, in the commission he had issued to inquire as to the funds of the colleges, had not made the scope of the inquiry a little more extensive. He found that the inquiry only extended to the property held by colleges for themselves or in trust. He did not altogether agree with the remark made by Professor Wilkins, that the fellows who received livings made bad clergymen. He believed that the college patronage would compare favourably with that of the bishops, of the Lord Chancellor, or the Crown, and still better, as compared with private patronage. It was not for the sake of the parishes that he objected to college patronage, but he objected to anything which created a bias in men's minds to take a turn to one profession rather more than to another, and to anything which established a legal restraint which operated in favour of any particular Church. He would not sell the college livings to private patrons, because that would increase the amount of private patronage that would have to be dealt with in disestablishing the Church, and would be increasing the difficulties in the way of that object. He thought it would be better that the revenues should be made over to the Crown, a handsome sum being paid to the colleges; and thus a step in advance would be taken in anticipation of the time when the Government would be required to deal with the whole question of disestablishment. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CHARLES E. B. REED, of Trinity College, Cambridge, considered that the conference should not separate without expressing its opinion upon the restrictions imposed upon the acquirement of degrees of divinity. At present one of the conditions of securing a degree of Bachelor of Arts was that the fellow should preach before the university in the university chapel; and this a Nonconformist could not do. The conference ought to assert its opinion in the resolution, that if the universities were considered national property they would not have divinity degrees, nor any other degrees, from which those who might not be able to conform with certain theological doctrines were excluded. The conference would be glad to hear that Mr. Fawcett had given an undertaking that in case no bill for the removal of clerical fellowships should be brought in by the Government, he would himself bring in a bill for the purpose. (Cheers.)

Mr. R. W. DALE said it seemed to him that the national universities ought not to confer degrees of divinity at all; but if these degrees were conferred, they should certainly be open to every Church alike, and should simply apply to competent knowledge in what was commonly understood as theological learning, which might be possessed by men of every variety of faith. If the conference adopted the suggestion of Mr. Reed, it would imply that they believed it was the functions of national universities to confer degrees in divinity. The conference was not altogether agreed

about that, and he trusted that that addition to the resolution would not be insisted upon. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was again read and unanimously carried, with the alteration of the phrase in the concluding sentence, "and the transfer to the Crown of the visitatorial powers now held by bishops," to "the withdrawal of the visitatorial powers," &c.

#### ENDOWED SCHOOLS AND THE CLAIMS OF NONCONFORMISTS.

A paper on the subject of "Endowed Schools and the claims of Nonconformists," prepared by Professor Sheldon Amos, was read, in his absence through illness, by Mrs. Amos, who was cheered on taking her husband's place on the platform. Mrs. Amos having failed to make herself heard over the hall, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, at her request, read the concluding part of it. After discussing the question of the reconstruction of endowed schools, in view of the two considerations of respect due to the intentions of the founders and the claims of an Established Church, the paper proceeded as follows:—

In the case of every endowed school, four main questions present themselves, as bearing directly on its religious or ecclesiastical character: First, what must be the religious faith of the trustees or governors? secondly, what must be the faith of the master? thirdly, what must be the faith, if any, taught in the course of the ordinary instruction given in the school? and, fourthly, what must be the faith of the pupils, their parents, or their guardians, as a condition precedent to admission to the school? As to the faith of the trustees, the law as applicable to any school founded within the Reformation period, and the trust-deeds of which contain no more definite description of the creed to be inculcated than what can be gathered from loose expressions, "teaching of literature or godly learning," or "godly learning and knowledge," was settled in the case of "Baker v. Lee," known as the Ilminster case. In this case, for the 156 years immediately preceding the suit, Nonconformists had been admitted to the trust as well as Churchmen, a selection which was the more plausible as the surplus of the trust funds was to go to general parish purposes, such as the repair of the highways. Nevertheless, the House of Lords (though the Lords present were equally divided) affirmed the ruling of the Lords Justices, who had reversed that of the Master of the Rolls. The law was settled to be in the words of Lord Wensleydale—

That where the intention of the founder was to provide for the religious instruction of the scholars, it must be taken to be *prima facie* according to the doctrine of the Church of England, and that the trustees to be appointed, in the full exercise of the Court of Chancery, ought to be members of that Church.

But even these cases convey a most imperfect impression of the hardships inflicted by the law on Nonconformists. Referring to the notorious case of the Attorney-General v. Cullum, decided in 1843, the Charity Commissioners (Trevillock Charity, XVI. Report) state that—

The original object of the foundation was not connected with any religious denomination. It was proposed to apply the funds to education. The scheme was prepared very much like that of the British and Foreign Society, but it was rejected by the Court in favour of a Church system with special exemptions, with the observation that the proposed scheme did not provide for what the judge could consider religious instruction at all, and, therefore, according to his previous remark, must be worse than a mockery.

Apart, then, from all novel legislation on the subject, such has long been, and still is, the doctrine of English law as administered in the Court of Chancery. Of late years, however, legislation has step by step been making inroads on the application of this doctrine, and indeed, for some purposes, upon the doctrine itself. The main epochs in the history of this legislation are marked by the passing of the Charitable Trusts Acts of 1853 and 1855, the Endowed Schools Act of 1860, and the Endowed Schools Act of 1869. The Charitable Trusts Acts of 1853 and 1855, though important as recognising the public right and duty of scrutinising severely the modes in which charitable trust funds are being employed, and as providing a new and tolerably efficient machinery for conducting such scrutiny, and for remedying glaring abuses, yet introduced no change in the existing presumption of law as to the paramount claims of the Church of England. By the 22nd section of the Act of 1853 the Board of Commissioners, appointed by the Act, might empower trustees to remove any schoolmaster or other officer of any charity, subject to obtaining the consent of the visitor, if there were one, in writing. The commissioners were also enabled, provisionally, to approve and certify such schemes for the reconstruction of charitable trusts as could only be carried into effect by the authority of Parliament. An annual report was to be laid before Parliament setting forth the schemes approved by the board, but no provision was made for their being recommended to or readily adopted by Parliament. The Charity Commissioners have over and over again insisted on the practical impotency of this part of the Act. Thus, under this Act, no concession whatever was made to the claims of Nonconformists, except so far as they were interested, in common with the rest of the community, in the remedy of gross abuses of trust. The next stage in the history of this legislation is that marked by the Endowed Schools Act of 1860. By this Act the trustees of endowed schools were entitled and required to make such rules as "would provide for admitting to the benefits of the school the children of parents not in communion with the church, sect, or denomination according to the doctrines or formularies of which religious instruction was to be afforded under the endowment of the said school." This was subject to a proviso that "in the will, deed, or instrument regulating the endowment nothing was contained expressly requiring the children educated under such endowment to learn or be instructed according to the doctrine or formularies of such church, sect, or denomination." It is obvious that with respect to the children of Nonconformists, this Act accorded them the smallest possible instalment of justice. Indeed, the meaning of the Act



goes to the extent that from all strict Church of England endowments the children of Nonconformists are absolutely excluded, even though their parents might wish them to be educated in the tenets of the Church of England. (Hear, hear.) It was not till the passing of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 that the real necessities of the country, the demands of justice, and the claims of Nonconformists, were, in respect of the reconstruction of educational endowments, approximately satisfied. This Act was based on the report of the Schools Inquiry Commission, to which, in its preamble, it refers. At an early stage of the proceedings of the School Inquiry Commissioners, Mr. Miall, in reply to a series of questions which the commissioners addressed to him, in common with a number of other competent authorities, stated the gist of the existing religious difficulty in respect to educational endowments. He asserted that, though he was a Dissenter, his opinion would be the same if he were a member of the Established Church. He pointed out that by the operation of the present rule of law the competition for the masterships of schools was narrowed, and that one-half of the population was excluded from such honourable competition; that boys up to the age of sixteen rarely could be induced to take an interest in controversial theology or ecclesiastical polity; that nine-tenths of the people who cared about religion held the same essential doctrines of Christianity, and that such expressions as "godly learning" should be interpreted in a broad, Catholic, Christian sense. This was the problem which the Government had to deal with, and the Act solves it as follows. It divides all the endowed schools contemplated by the Act into two classes, which may be termed "denominational" and "undenominational" respectively. In order for a school to come under the first, or "denominational" class, the following two conditions must be fulfilled: First, there must be found in the original instrument of foundation, or in the statutes or regulations made by the founder, or under his authority in his lifetime, or within fifty years of his death, the express requirement of distinctive religious teaching; secondly, the requirement must have been satisfied up to the date of the commencement of the Act. If these conditions are not satisfied, the school is "undenominational" for the purposes of the Act. Under the Act, commissioners specially appointed for the purposes of the Act are required to prepare schemes for the reconstitution of educational endowments, such schemes to be laid for forty days before Parliament, and then, unless objected to, to become law. In the case of undenominational schools, the Act directs that:—

(1). The religious opinions of any person, or his attendance or non-attendance at any particular form of religious worship shall not in any way affect his qualification for being one of the governing body of an endowment; (2) that a person shall not be disqualified for being a master in an endowed school by reason of his not being, and not intending to be, in holy orders; (3) that day-scholars attending an endowed school may, by notice in writing from their parents or guardians, be exempted from attending prayer or religious worship, or from any lesson or series of lessons on a religious subject, without loss of any advantage to which the scholars would otherwise be entitled.

Provisions are also made for the special case of boarding schools, whereby scholars are, under such last-mentioned circumstances, to be allowed to attend the school as day-scholars, and enjoy the exemption just described. As to denominational schools, while the commissioners were required to prepare schemes for the reconstitution of them as well as of the others, and so probably to substitute a new race of governors, nevertheless the religious opinions, and attendance or non-attendance at particular forms of religious worship might continue to affect the eligibility of persons to be governors, and the question of being or not intending to be in holy orders might continue to affect the eligibility of persons to be masters. Thus while in denominational schools the discretion of the commissioners in the matter of the religious opinions of the persons they appoint as governors is in no way controlled by the Act, in denominational schools that discretion is so far controlled that no religious or ecclesiastical test of any sort must be imposed or indirectly used. In both classes of schools it is left to the governing body, in conjunction with the headmaster, to make such regulations for religious instruction in the school as shall seem fit to them, subject, in all cases, to the operation of the conscience-clause described. The Act itself is thus seen to be a fair concession to the claims of justice. The line between a strict denominational school and all other schools is drawn in a different way, and a far more righteous spirit than was and is the practice in the Courts of Chancery. Under the Endowed Schools Act the Ilminster School, in which merely "godly learning" was to be taught, would be reckoned as an undenominational school. The commissioners would be entitled to nominate persons of any religious faith to be governors, and would not be entitled to make the profession of any particular faith obligatory. With the governors so nominated it would rest what should be, in the future, the religious faith, if any, to be inculcated in the school.

It thus appeared that the responsibility of doing justice to the claims of Nonconformists had been shifted from the law courts on to the Legislature, and from the Legislature again, in a vast degree, to the Endowed Schools Commissioners. The present commissioners happened to be men of rare liberality of mind and generosity of spirit. As a whole they had done the hard and invidious work they had undertaken in a way which could not but commend itself even to the most exacting of critics. Nevertheless, the claims of Nonconformists were still opposed by such a dead weight of obstructiveness, prejudice, and intolerance in so many influential quarters, that it was scarcely possible to urge too strongly the necessity of jealously watching the several schemes as they successively emerged from the laboratory of the commissioners. The best or only answer of the commissioners to the incessant assaults made upon them by the champions of corrupt and vested interests of all sorts was the real and threatening pressure of all the Nonconformists in the country. So far as they desired to do their work well and faithfully, they would be thankful to all persons who, even with an excess of declamation, pointed out the minutest de-

lection from a rigid standard of justice and equality. The paper further pointed out a number of cases in which the commissioners had altered the schemes presented to them, under the apparent influence of Church leanings, and urged that all who had the claims of Nonconformists—and thereby of public justice—at heart, would do well to keep a keen eye upon the several schemes as they are presented. Whatever be the personal character and qualifications of the existing commissioners, they could not dispense with support, stimulus, and criticism, even of the most unflinching sort. (Cheers.) Next session a new era awaited educational legislation. In a year, or, at most, a couple of years, the powers of the existing commissioners would legally terminate. Provision had to be made by what was called the second part of the Endowed Schools Bill for the permanent supervision and control of the newly-constituted foundations. It would demand the most strenuous and watchful efforts both of Nonconformists and of honest Churchmen to secure that no narrow prejudices or sinister interests interfered with the claims of public justice in perfecting the new legislation. (Cheers.)

The Rev. J. JENKYN BROWN, of Birmingham, moved:—

That this conference, while acknowledging the great merits of the measure for the reorganisation and reform of endowed schools passed in the session of 1869, is strongly of opinion that the policy of the Endowed Schools Commissioners, as illustrated in the numerous schemes already issued, some of which have been sanctioned by Parliament, contravenes the spirit, and in some cases the letter, of the measure and the principle of religious equality. While the conference regards with satisfaction the removal from the new schemes of the clerical *ex-officio* governors, it regards with dissatisfaction the fact that of the first governing bodies appointed in nearly every instance a large majority of the governors belonging to one political and ecclesiastical party. Their disapprobation is still further increased by the fact that the principles upon which these governing bodies are constituted secure the perpetuation of this injustice for an indefinite period. The conference makes no special demand upon behalf of Nonconformists, as compared with members of the Church of England, but claims that the extreme extent to which the co-optative principle is recognised should be restricted, that the area of popular selection should be so enlarged that Nonconformists should take their fair share with the rest of the community; and this conference earnestly trusts that the Government will decline to lay before Parliament any schemes which are open to the objection urged in this resolution.

He said the resolution covered the whole ground of controversy. They were present as Nonconformists, it was true, but they were present also as Englishmen and as citizens, and they claimed in regard to the endowed schools equality with all other citizens—absolute and entire equality. They did not ask any special privilege, they would not tolerate an inferior position for themselves. (Hear, hear.) It was well they should start at the beginning. (Cheers.) He protested against the constitution of the Endowed Schools Commission itself—(Hear, hear.)—which was a commission representing a sect and only a sect. (Hear, hear.) It was a commission incapable of understanding or sympathising either with Nonconformist principles or their rights. (Hear, hear.) He understood representations were made to the Vice-President of the Council with regard to the formation of that commission, but it met with the success that representations made to Liberal Governments had usually met with. The representation should be made to the House of Commons itself. (Hear, hear.) That commission should have been challenged there, in the face of the nation and on the ground of the rights of Nonconformists. It might be quite true that they would be defeated there, but that class of victory ruined those who gained it. (Hear, hear.) He was quite sure they would never appeal to the sense of justice and right of the nation without succeeding. (Hear, hear.) There were those whom centuries of favouritism had made so self-complacent that they would tell Nonconformists that members of their body would long ago have been co-optative members of the commission if they could only have found men fit for the post. There were Nonconformists in and out of Parliament who were equal to any of the three gentlemen on the committee. (Hear, hear.) If Nonconformists meant to be respected, they must respect themselves. (Cheers.) Let them not go to any Minister's office, but, in the face of day and of their representatives, ask from them a fair voice in the new constitution of these schools. He did not think it was too late to do that yet. The schemes that had been passed were confessedly illegal schemes. There were many more yet, and Mr. Gladstone should know that they had no faith in the commissioners at all—(Hear, hear.)—and that the only thing that could kindle their faith was the putting of men upon the commission whom they could trust, and who understood their principles. (Cheers.) They claimed an abolition of sect in the governing of these schools. At present, if an angel from heaven were to come down and did not conform—(laughter)—he would not be placed on the commission. Nonconformists had a right to expect that the universities should be open to them as much as to any clergymen in the realm. Nonconformists claimed absolute equality in Government-aided schools. The bill provided that the governing body should have absolute power to arrange any religious teaching whatsoever—Church catechisms, Church formularies, and bishops' dogmas, all may reveal unrestrained in these schools, and the only protection that Nonconformists had was the conscience clause. Did anybody know what that was in a little town or village? (Hear, hear.) Her Majesty's Government must be told that when national property was used in religion, no sect whatever should be favoured in that school. (Cheers.) Nobody had a

right to teach his own creed or faith in a national school. He hoped the conference would convey to the Government very distinctly that all the schemes that are propounded were such as violated in spirit and act the rights of Nonconformists, and that they would never rest satisfied until that arrangement for religious teaching in Church of England schools or national schools was entirely swept away. (Applause.)

Mr. W. M. FAWCETT seconded the resolution. He said that it was necessary to give a little consideration to a comparison of the action of the Endowed Schools Commissioners with the recommendations of the previous School Inquiry Commission. They would remember that Lord Lyttelton and Mr. Forster were both members of the Inquiry Commission, and both concurred in its report. One could hardly have expected to find Lord Lyttelton as an endowed school commissioner recanting the opinion of Lord Lyttelton as a school inquiry commissioner. Let them see how far the recommendations of the School Inquiry Commission had been carried out in the schemes sanctioned by the Endowed School Commission. The first question for decision was the constitution of the governing bodies of educational endowments. Were the trustees to be self-elected, or *ex officio*, or representative? How many trustees should be appointed, and from what class should they be chosen? On all these points the Schools Inquiry Commission had made definite recommendations, carefully basing these recommendations upon the evidence contained in the supplementary report. On all these points the Endowed School Commissioners had acted as though that evidence and these recommendations had never existed. First, as to the number of trustees. The School Inquiry Commission recommended the number to be from six to twelve. But so far from this being the case, they saw that in eighteen of the forty schemes in existence that limit had been exceeded. Then, as to the important question of the mode and choice of trustees. He need hardly remind them that under the old system the vast majority of the bodies of trustees were co-optative or self-elective. If that system had proved successful, there would, of course, have been no necessity for an Endowed Schools Bill, and it was to remedy the evils of that system that the Endowed School Commission was appointed. The School Inquiry Commission on that point expressly stated that the co-optative or self-elective principle was an advantage when the surviving members were wise; but when trustees were selected because they occupied a leading position in the town, not for their intelligence and public spirit, but on the ground of personal friendship and political and theological agreement, the inevitable tendency was to exclude wise and liberal men. The Endowed School Commissioners, in the face of these recommendations, had inserted co-optative trustees in no fewer than thirty-three out of the forty-four schemes, and in thirty of that thirty-three one-third or more were co-optative, and in ten cases one-half or more were self-elected, and out of the whole seventy-four governors sixty-five were Churchmen and nine Nonconformists. Then, again, as to the *ex officio* trustees, the majority had no natural connection with the school, but the management was left to one or two who might happen to take an interest in the school, or else to some one who was residing near the place. Thus, when the assistant-commissioner visited Normanton, in a school where there were twenty *ex officio* trustees, the master was lazily reading *Bell's Life*, and eleven children were following their own devices. The Schools Inquiry Commission also recommended that persons should be on the trust who belonged to the same class as the boys. How had the Endowed School Commission carried out the recommendations? He believed that in two of the forty schemes the representative governors were to be chosen exclusively by the parents, in two by the parents jointly and the school, and in no fewer than eight the representative governors were chosen exclusively by the vestry, and that meant by the parson of the parish. Thus, in every one of the three points, the recommendations of the School Inquiry Commission had been discarded.

Mr. R. W. DALE, of Birmingham, said he thought it important to call the attention of the conference to one or two points in connection with this subject. He felt that they ought to appeal, and if necessary in Parliament, to Her Majesty's Ministers for some modification in the constitution of the commission that was entrusted with the administration of the Act. He had no doubt that Her Majesty's Government would ask them whether the time had not come for discarding in the constitution of a commission intended to serve the State the religious opinions of its members? Government would ask whether their own members did not require that Government should leave the consideration of the religious opinions of its servants out of view altogether, and he supposed all of them would be ready to answer that they trusted the time would come when it would be possible in a State commission of this kind to give no consideration at all to the religious opinions of the persons who were placed upon it. But let it be remembered that for many generations gone by the whole nation had been divided into two camps by religious opinion, or rather in consequence of the special patronage bestowed by the State upon one particular type of religious opinion. The result of this separation of the nation into two great bodies was that the fairest men on one side were in great danger of misapprehending the position and claims



of men on the other side. He believed that Lord Lyttelton, the Rev. Canon Robinson, and Mr. Hobhouse were fair-minded, generous men, but then they had grown up under a atmosphere which was altogether unfavourable to a knowledge on their part of the real condition of English society in relation to the questions which separated them from the Established Church. If they were appointing persons to administer any important Parliamentary measure in Ireland, they would certainly take care to appoint some Irishmen on that commission, men who knew the customs and traditions of the country; and inasmuch as this commission was to deal, among other questions, with the question of religious equality, it was most important that one of its members at least should be a man who had not lived all his life under what they believed to be the disastrous influence of a favourite, patronised Church. The time would come when it would be possible and wise for the Ministry to discard altogether—in appointing men to a Government commission—the religious opinions of the men who were appointed, but at present, and in making that transition which this Endowed Schools Act intended to promote, they believed it to be absolutely indispensable that men of various ecclesiastical opinions should be employed by Government to effect its purposes. He would remind them that although the commissioners had very much in their power, those who resided in the localities affected by the various schemes had also considerable influence. The commissioners said they were prepared to listen to a statement carefully drawn up and fairly supported from the localities to which the scheme applied. They must not suppose that when a scheme was sent down and published, that the commissioners were absolutely committed to the details of such scheme. In the memorandum which was sent down from the office a few days ago there was a clause to which their attention should be directed. It said:—

After the scheme is provisionally framed it must be published; after publication anyone is at liberty to send in objections and suggestions. The commissioners are then in a strictly judicial position bound to hear all parties, and decide on the merits.

It was not necessary, as he had sometimes been asked, that such a man should be a ratepayer in order to send in such a memorial to the commissioners. Anybody living in the neighbourhood of the school affected might forward a complaint to the commissioners with regard to any of the details of the scheme, and ask for modifications. There was one point to which sufficient attention had not been paid. They must remember that the 19th clause of the Endowed Schools Act preserved the denominational character of the schools under certain conditions. So far as he understood, there had hardly been a case in which the decision of the commissioners had been challenged as to the denominational character of the teaching which they claimed to belong to the Church of England. He thought that it was time, when they learnt that the commissioners had decided that a school came under the 19th clause, to inquire whether or not the circumstances of the case justified the putting of the school under that clause, thus reserving such schools to the Church of England. The commission had issued an important memorandum in relation to this question:—

To consider the terms quoted, it is not enough that the school has hitherto been under the management of exclusively denominational trustees, or that by the deed of foundation, or by any statutes, or by a scheme of the Court of Chancery, or of the Charity Commissioners, the trustees or teachers are required to be members of a particular Church or denomination, or the scholars are required to attend a particular place of worship, or that by long usage, or by the directions of a scheme, certain documents, formularies, or catechisms have been taught. There must be (1), the express requirement of distinctive religious teaching; (2), that requirement must be expressed in either the original instrument of foundation or in the statutes made under the founders' authority, and within fifty years of his death; (3), the absence of any proved breach of requirement.

He thought, on the consideration of that clause, it did become them to see whether they could not rescue some of these schools from the denominational character which was likely to be imposed upon them by a direct appeal to the commissioners on the matter. He had reason to believe that the commissioners were extremely anxious upon that particular point. A point of this kind raised a question of extreme delicacy, and he thought that the Nonconformists in the different localities affected by the scheme ought not to leave the commissioners without their kindly assistance in forming a judgment on the matter. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. T. W. DAVIDS, Colchester, said that Nonconformists had it in their power to very effectively help themselves in this matter if they would only bestir themselves more. (Hear, hear.) True, they had a great deal to complain of as regarded the commissioners, but still the commissioners were amenable to be influenced if they chose to exert themselves. (Hear, hear.) Reference had been made by one speaker to a case in the county of Essex, and since he (Mr. Davids) had entered the conference that morning he found that two Nonconformists had been elected upon the board of trustees in that school. (Hear, hear.) He also knew other cases where, when they had thought fit to stir themselves, Nonconformists had been surprised to find the amount of sympathy immediately evinced in quarters where it was little looked for.

The Rev. A. TILLEY, Cardiff, suggested a rider

to the resolution declaring that the constitution of the commission ought to be revised, and that, seeing it had shown such a leaning to one denomination, it had forfeited the confidence of Nonconformists. (Cheers.)

Mr. DALE: The power of the commission terminates in a short time, and they will have to be appointed.

Mr. TILLEY: The clause in the resolution will still hold good. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. F. SONLEY JOHNSTONE seconded the proposition, and the resolution, with this addition, was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN said that before the conference separated he wished to congratulate them upon the tone of the proceedings at their first sitting. (Cheers.) He believed that he stated somewhat below the actual fact when he said that 1,880 delegates had attended the morning conference. (Renewed cheering.)

Three cheers having been given for Mr. Miall, the conference adjourned.

#### THE EVENING MEETING.

In consequence of the over-crowding of the Friends' Meeting House at the morning sitting of the conference, the evening meeting was adjourned to the Free-trade Hall. The body of the hall was occupied by the delegates, while the galleries were set apart for spectators. This arrangement, apparently, had not been thoroughly understood by those attending the meeting, and a division of the delegates from the spectators became necessary before business could be commenced, which afforded much amusement to those who had obtained the best seats in both parts of the hall. Mr. William Crossfield, Liverpool, occupied the chair, and was supported by a large and influential platform.

The CHAIRMAN said that he appeared there as the representative of the Liverpool Nonconformists, a body of gentlemen who, he would not say had been somewhat vilified, but it had been said that they in Liverpool were not quite up to the mark. (A laugh.) This was an unjust accusation, for the Liverpool Nonconformists were the first body in the kingdom to protest against the payment of fees by school boards in denominational schools. They were not only the first to object, but they sent a deputation to the department in London, though unfortunately without favourable result. The first subject of conversation that evening was the payment of fees in denominational schools, and he believed the conference would be unanimous in protesting against that. Nonconformists were fully justified in demanding that the 25th section of the Education Act should be repealed. In 1870, Mr. Gladstone said that local boards should cease to have any connection with a voluntary school, and that those schools, so far as they had been dependent upon public aid, should only stand in relation to the Privy Council. The payment of fees by school boards in denominational schools was a direct violation of the Act as first introduced, and, therefore, Nonconformists were fully warranted in asking for the withdrawal of that clause. As to Mr. Forster, he scarcely knew what to say. When Mr. Forster first commenced his career in Parliament he had great admiration for him, and he thought he was going to be a rising man, but his recent acts had shaken his confidence—(Hear, hear)—and his boast that he would canter over the religious difficulty had landed him in a quagmire, which both he and his steed would be glad to get out of. (Laughter and cheers.) Some allusion had been made to the Scotch Education Bill. His impression was that the Scotch were quite alive to the consequences of denominational education. They saw the consequences in reference to the Irish Bill. He was surprised to think that Conservatives and Churchmen in England had not also seen that the result of their receiving the payment of fees from the rates must involve payment to Roman Catholics in Ireland. (Cheers.)

#### PAYMENT OF FEES BY SCHOOL BOARDS TO DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS.

The Rev. HENRY W. CROSSKEY (one of the secretaries of the Central Nonconformist Committee) read a paper on "The payment of fees by school boards to denominational schools." He said that the payment of such fees by school boards was no exceptional incident accidentally involved in the working of the Elementary Education Act, which might be discussed as a point of detail, and dismissed as insignificant, whatever decision as to its propriety might be reached; but was part of an educational policy which, alike in the principle upon which it rests and the method of its administration, was incompatible with the existence of religious liberty. It was a strong and useful link in that chain of ecclesiastical authority with which it was now attempted to bind the free development of the education of this kingdom. The school board, by paying fees, abnegated its functions as a school board, and became a mere instrument for collecting money with which to pay other organisations to take charge of the education of a town. It handed public funds to persons who in relation to the community occupied no official position, and acknowledged no local responsibility. The State did not accept the duty abandoned by the school board. It furnished "grants in aid," according to a certain

exceedingly low standard; but with the direction of a denominational school the denomination was alone concerned. The parent had no voice in the denominational school. He paid the taxes out of which the grant in aid came, and he was subjected to the rate; but a few rich sectarian subscribers would take charge of his child. By the payment of fees the board, although elected by the ratepayers, refused to do their work; the parent was put out of court while the nominees of rival sects became the managers of schools which would exist in the place of national schools, and in many districts would be filled by a compulsory law. The ecclesiastical committees placed in authority over education were assisted by the fees they received in their specially sectarian work. It was asserted that this was not a correct representation, since every public school had a conscience clause, and the fee paid by a board must be held to apply only to secular results. The very fact that a school required a conscience clause proved that it existed as a sectarian institution. (Cheers.) The fees were devoted to the support of the whole school as a school, and those who flattered themselves "with the understanding that the payment of fees is not made in respect of any instruction in denominational religious subjects," might be answered in the words of the Apostle Paul—"If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it not therefore of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye I am not of the body, is it not therefore of the body?" Although the amount of the fee paid might not exceed the cost of secular instruction, it would materially relieve those who supported denominational schools as bulwarks of their Church. By filling sectarian schools with rate-supported scholars, and increasing the grants in aid, a gigantic system of religious endowment had been organised by Her Majesty's Government; and any strong sect, such as the Church of England or the Church of Rome, would be able to educate its children almost entirely without private subscription.

I am personally acquainted with a school which, during the past year, educated 220 children at a cost to the subscribers of 71. 10s.; and with another school, which educated 544 (676 on the books), with a contribution of about 70l., and even the whole of this will probably not be required after the next examination. In some cases, by certain acute methods of managing, an actual profit may be won to be carried over to a building account.

As an example of the possible working of the new system on a large scale, take the following case. From a return (March 2, 1870) it appears there were in Leeds eighty-four Church of England schools, supported in the following manner:—

|                         | £     | s. | d. |
|-------------------------|-------|----|----|
| Subscriptions . . . . . | 2,368 | 5  | 4  |
| Fees . . . . .          | 4,768 | 17 | 4  |
| Grant . . . . .         | 4,325 | 3  | 4  |

Total cost . . . . . 11,462 6 0

What are the possibilities under the new Act and code? Let empty benches be filled by the payments from rate, and a moderate estimate would give—

|  |       |    |   |
|--|-------|----|---|
| Fees . . . . .   | 5,768 | 17 | 4 |
| Let 2,000l. be struck off subscriptions, leaving . . . . . | 368   | 5  | 4 |

Amount of fees and subscriptions . . . 6,137 2 8  
The amount still required to meet the total cost of 11,462l. 2s. 7d. will therefore be, 5,315l. 3s. 4d. The whole of this sum can be earned (and as the shock of the higher standards is got over, will probably be earned) without exceeding the 50 per cent. increase, and without transgressing the limitation of the code that the grant in aid is not to exceed the income derived from voluntary contributions, and from school fees, and from any other sources other than the Parliamentary grant. 14,443 children may be educated in the principles of the Church of England by a subscription of only 368l. 5s. 4d., State money and rates helping out the fees; and, as the machinery is brought into smooth working order, even this pittance may be diminished.

Regarding the time-table, even that poor and unworthy protection granted to the ratepayer in the board schools by the provision that "no religious catechism or religious formula which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught" (although the creed contained in catechism and formula might be taught) did not extend to the denominational school. The Government durst not openly apply the ratepayers' money to denominational purposes in a board school, and a flimsy and deceptive conscience clause was contrived to secure the reality by sacrificing the shadow; while by the payment of fees to existing schools a sect was directly subsidised. A time-table conscience clause did not touch the principle upon which Nonconformity stood. Nonconformists challenged the fairness, and they doubted the Christian results, of the application of a public tax to the service of any sect. They contended that whenever the responsibilities of the Church were thrown upon the State, the State was guilty of an interference with the freedom of its citizens, the injustice of which could be measured by a precisely corresponding loss of spiritual power. They were not answered by being told that the course to which they objected would be pursued at one hour and not at another. Nonconformists were prepared to accept fairly a national system of education. Out of 3,230 building grants applied for during the time of grace, 460 were sought for by Nonconformists of all denominations, 82 by Catholics, and 2,852 by the Church of England. In some towns Nonconformists had offered their schools to boards at a nominal rent on condition that their unsectarian character should



be preserved. The reward meted out to Nonconformists for their readiness to sacrifice sectarian gain for the sake of national education was to have their money seized to pay the fees to Church of England and Catholic schools. If Nonconformists were content to receive this treatment with quietness, they must hear the burning words that Cassius spake:—

And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?  
I know he would not be a wolf,  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep:  
He were no lion were not Romans' hinds—

and abandon for ever their dream of religious equality. Parents would be canvassed to send their children into these Church of England and Catholic schools by Scripture-readers and priests, who would make the payment of fees a bribe, and the encouragement of pauperism would accompany ecclesiastical ascendancy. For the honour of Christianity, as for the noblest interests of education, this alliance between pauperism and priestcraft must be broken by the strong arm of Nonconformity. Supposing, however, a town to be full of denominational schools, must not the fees be paid? He replied that the existence of denominational schools alone did not furnish "efficient and suitable" provision for the education of a free people; and that either board schools in which fees might be remitted ought at once to be erected in every district, or the denominational school must agree to submit its secular hours to board control. Why should a denominational school object to this course? According to its own showing it was only for secular instruction that it received the fees, and it was only secular instruction it gave outside the conscience-clause hours. There could be no principle, therefore, to prevent it from hiring its room to a board during those hours in which (itself being witness) it used them for secular work alone. In the case of conflicting interests the denominational must give way to the national school, and not the national school to the denominational. The best result of withholding fees from denominational schools would be to compel the Christian Church to do, what it seemed unwilling to do, its own Christian work. Moreover, if ordinary school hours were honestly kept for the secular work required by existing regulations, there would, during those hours, be precisely the same teaching at every school, whether Protestant or Catholic, and the imagined right of a parent to compel the State to support a sectarian school either amounted to the ridiculous claim that he ought to have his child taught the same things in one building and not in another, or threw upon the State the duty of providing any and every form of religion its subjects might ask. The payment of fees by school boards to denominational schools was one chapter in a great controversy. On the one side was the principle that education must be dispensed by dominant ecclesiastical authorities, claiming the schoolroom as well as the church as their own peculiar possession, and employing national resources for their own supremacy. On the other side was the principle that the national school belonged to the nation, and must therefore be freed from the regulations of a sectarian exclusiveness; while religious men must be trusted to exercise their noble activities, in their own place and at their own time, on behalf of that Christian culture best given by those who most devoutly believed. It was not a question between education and no education. (Hear.) The Government deliberately increased and strengthened denominational schools, and then one of its members, Mr. Lowe, ventured to say we must either take them or leave children in the streets. A sectarian system on an enormous scale was being established, and Nonconformists were asked to pause in their objections until the work was done, and the new vested interests became too powerful to remove. (Hear, hear.) It was the alternative always offered by the priesthood, and by those who, however unconsciously or unwilling, did the work of priesthood. They ever cried, "Be saved by us or perish." (Cheers.) Without interposing any period of ignorance, it would be perfectly possible for boards to provide temporary accommodation, and to hasten the erection of board schools far more earnest than they were inclined to do now that the power of paying fees was in their hands, apparently to the satisfaction of the department and their own sectarian members. It would be perfectly possible to separate the secular and religious elements of instruction more fairly than was now done, and commit each subject to its own teachers—the teachers of the one subject being provided by voluntary effort, those of the other being the servants of the community. It would be perfectly possible to arrange that representatives of the ratepayers should have some control over schools supported by public funds during those hours in which ordinary instruction was given to children of all sects. In these and other ways a national system could obtain, what it had not at present, a chance of growth, and no necessity whatever could be pleaded for paying fees from public rates to schools under private management. Reviewing the facts as they recalled the policy of the Government, he deliberately charged the Education Department with the determination to crush out a national and establish an ecclesiastical system of education. The attempt of the Church of England and the Church of Rome, by the aid of the Government, to grasp the control of education stood to this country as the Ultramontane conspiracy did to Europe. It must be resisted at all hazards—(loud cheers)—and every tie of party must yield to the loftier responsibilities of a faith in the free life

of the soul and the free culture of the mind of man. (Renewed cheering.)

The Rev. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A., of Clapham, moved the first resolution—

That this conference, regarding the payment by school boards of the fees of children attending denominational schools as involving the imposition of taxation for the support of the creeds of differing churches, requests one of its friends, immediately on the assembling of Parliament, on behalf of the Nonconformists of England and Wales, to bring forward a motion for the repeal of the 25th Clause of the Elementary Education Act, and the omission of the words from Clause 74: "3. Providing for the payment of the whole or any part of the fees of any child where the parent satisfies the school board that he is unable from poverty to pay the same," and pledges its members to support this motion with all the resources at their command.

There was a time when Dissenters were said to be divided on this question of education, but Mr. Forster had made them one. They had specially to thank Mr. Forster for the 25th Clause. They were prepared to bear the snubbing of their deputations—to bear the system of cumulative votes by which their electoral power had been so much crippled in boroughs; they were prepared even to bear the rejection of Mr. Jacob Bright's amendment; but when it was found that the object was not to establish a national school at all, but to provide denominational schools, they could stand it no longer, and, as one man, they had risen up and said, "It shall not be." (Great cheers.) They were blamed by some because they did not oppose grants from the Privy Council. It was said that if they did not object to grants from the Privy Council to denominational schools, why object to grants from the school boards? Nonconformists were driven to this position—and they were not ashamed to take it—that the continuance of denominational schools was utterly incompatible with the establishment of a true national system. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) He thought Mr. Forster had done good even to the National Education League at Birmingham. Its last programme was far better than the former one. Whilst they wanted the Bible taught in schools they had no legitimate standing ground upon which to establish their opposition to national education. The Bible was the test-book of Nonconformists—it was their Protestant book—but they had no right to force it into the schools of the nation, which was composed of partly Roman Catholics, partly secularists, Jews, and so forth. (Cheers.) Nonconformists had been hunting after a phantom called unsectarian religious education, when there was no such thing in the world; and because they had been engaged in that wild-goose chase their opponents had had in view a sectarian education, which had placed Nonconformists in their present position. (Cheers.) He hoped the Government would not suppose that they meant to be content with the repeal of the 25th clause. (Hear.) That was but the beginning; they did not mean to allow the matter to rest there. (Hear, hear.) They intended to have it repealed, because to continue it would be to create vested rights, which would afterwards claim compensation. They were beset on all sides with vested rights, for which they were perpetually paying through the nose. (Cheers.) He did not like the meeting to be called a Nonconformist Conference: it was a conference of the Liberal party to protest against the desertion by their leaders of the principle upon which the Liberal party went to the country at the last election. That principle was religious equality—(cheers)—and they had deserted it, but they (the Nonconformists) stood by it, and meant to stand by it. (Cheers.) They did not mean to be cajoled by any party cries. He did not mean to say that they were going to vote for Mr. Disraeli, or for that pattern statesman without genius, Lord Derby—(Hear, hear)—but he meant to say that, whoever it helped and whoever it hindered, they, as Nonconformists, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation, for the sake of the principles they held, were bound to say that they would not allow the Liberal Government to take the education of the country and cast it over, bound hand and foot, into the hands of any priesthood whatever. (Loud cheering.)

The Rev. H. W. PARKINSON (Rochdale), in seconding the motion, said that a false cry had been raised against Nonconformists by their opponents of their indifference to the need of religious education. What was meant under this taunt was to cover the multiplication of a vast system of Church and Toryifying machinery. (Laughter.) The Education Act had not been wanted either for secular or religious reasons in any district where the squire and the parson divided the parish between them. It was only wanted where there were Dissenters and Nonconformists to make head against in behalf of a priestly system. (Hear.) The religious education which would be given under this Act would be of this character, that two and two would make the requirement of the child to do its duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him. (Laughter.) That a verb agreed with—what its godfathers and godmothers promised to do for it. (Much laughter.) When they were convinced that it was only in the maintenance of ecclesiastical supremacy that this cry of religion was raised, it was for them to ask to whom had the religious life of this country been indebted for 200 years gone by? (Cheers.) How came it that this newly-awakened zeal for religion should be manifested by the adherents of the Established Church? He felt quite convinced that if Nonconformists did not make a stand upon this question now, the coils of a system would be wrapped about them which would stifle all religion under the name of religion—(cheers)—which would place the religious faith, the conscience, and the daily life of the people of this country in

the hands of those who were the direst enemies equally of religion and of liberty. And when they heard the objection sometimes made by those who were disposed to desert them on this question that if they would only educate the children it might be trusted they would come out right in religious matters, his reply was this: From whence, except from the seeds of education and learning in this country, had come those waves of feeling which threatened to lead them back into the old times of ignorance and superstition? It was the men who had taken their place under the shadows of those universities who had proved that the darkest place was just under the candlestick. (Laughter.)

Mr. Councillor COLLINGS, of Birmingham, supported the resolution.

The Rev. Dr. RALEIGH, of Canonbury, who was very cordially received, said he wished to ask, had their opponents made any concession, as they said they had, in this matter? (Hear.) They had consented not to teach the Church Catechism in National schools, or not in schools where secular education was paid for by the parents of children who did not believe in it, and they called this a concession! (Cheers and laughter.) They would allow the children of Nonconformists to enter a Church school for a secular education, to be paid for richly by the nation under the protection of what they called a conscience clause. He protested—(cheers)—that no conscience clause which the wit of man can devise could be a protection to him or his child but by first insulting and degrading both. (Loud cheers.) He should not at all wonder if some day it was said to be a concession to Nonconformists by the Church of England—that the Minister of Education had himself descended from Puritan ancestors. (Cheers and laughter.) With all respect to Mr. Forster, if this was the best he could do in the sphere of education, then his descent from the Puritans was very considerable. (Laughter and cheers.) Their opponents had conceded nothing substantial. The defects of this measure had been represented to the Privy Council in the most urgent and respectful way, but not one faint hope had been held out as to the possibility of any change, in a direction which they all so earnestly desired. (Hear, hear.) Their opponents, however, had given them no end of good advice. (Laughter.) Sir John Pakington was almost tearful in his anxiety that they should not disturb the present arrangement; and Lord Derby cynically alluded to their natural disappointment at the result of their own bargain. He (the speaker) contended that they had made no bargain. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Individual men amongst them, in Parliament and out of Parliament, had expressed themselves on the side of the Government, as they had a perfect right to do—(Hear, hear)—but if the Government took such individuals as representing, in any large or true sense, Nonconformity, or of any Nonconformist bodies with which they were connected, they did that on their own responsibility. (Hear, hear.) They did it not only without evidence, but against evidence—(cheers)—and against remonstrances and protests. (Hear, hear.) They were, therefore, not acting an unfriendly part in maintaining this agitation until they accomplished their end. (Cheers.) They could not let the measure have a fair trial, for to let that which was wrong in principle and policy grow would be to allow more injustice to grow. (Cheers.) Nonconformists themselves had been misled in this matter; they had gone through in a night train and had fallen asleep; but now in the grey dawn of morning they were awaking, and they saw cathedral towers where, as the song said, "No towers ought to be." (Laughter and cheers.) They saw immediately that there had been some mistake, that they must go back; but they were told to let the train have a fair trial. (Laughter.) It was true they had been speeding along the Great Northern line; but they must go further—they must go to Stoneyhurst. (Cheers.) Whilst other trains were current trains, this was a concurrent train. (Renewed cheering.) He should not wonder if this same Stoneyhurst, and that which it represented, should be the means of getting them out of all this confusion and trouble, because he held that if they went to York they ought to go to Stoneyhurst. (Cheers.) If they endowed denominational teaching in England, they ought to endow it in Scotland and Ireland also. (Hear, hear.)

If we could only get Scotland right in this question then all would be right. (Hear, hear.) I have nothing but thanks to those Roman Catholic prelates who speak out plainly and tell us what they conceive to be their just rights; and I say it is impossible to show that they are not asking for what are their rights, and that we are not unjust and tyrannous and mean in withholding them, unless we amend our ways and retrace our own erring steps. There is only one way out of all this. Let all Churches be disestablished—(loud cheers)—and then if any one Church shall develop as we have been told the Roman Catholic religion has developed in history, in anti-social mischief or anything inconsistent with the rights and liberties of a free people, it can be dealt with in its own nature and for what it is, not as a bad form of religion, but as a bad thing which a just and free State cannot suffer to exist beyond certain limits. And let the State give us what the State can give us far better than any religious community, any church of whatever kind, a good secular education; that is to say, an education in those branches of human knowledge in which all rational persons are agreed, the teaching of which, therefore, may be enforced by a compulsion that will never be needed when it is once known to exist, and for which you may justly tax the whole community without the power of injuring any reasonable, I might say rational, conscience. And let the responsibility for



religious teaching and for the Bible and the use of it be thrown upon those who love them and who are the appointed agents for their propagation in the world. Make new appeals to the love and loyalty of those who believe in the upper world and in the unseen Master. Make new claims, and call for new sacrifices, and I am sure that the result will be an increase, an improvement, both in quality and in amount, not deterioration, not decline, of true religious education in England. (Prolonged cheering.)

Mr. WARBURTON, of Salford, had taken some trouble, with regard to Salford, to make known that, after paying for 1,737 children not previously paid for, the attendance at the schools was 713 less than previously. There were members of school boards present, and he wished to suggest to them to make the attempt to ascertain these statistics in each locality. The state of Salford was only an example of the state of many other towns as to the diminution of attendance since the boards began to pay these fees. The thing was perfectly natural. Parents keep their children at home, and said they were too poor to pay for them, in order that the board might be induced to pay. There was one school in Salford that would make a profit of from 100*l.* to 200*l.* during the next twelve months from the Government grants. He mentioned also with regret that there was at least one Nonconformist school in Salford not only receiving Government grants, but also receiving fees from the school board. ("Shame!") He hoped the result of this conference would be that all such things would disappear. We are taunted with these facts, and what is the use of talking against them? At future elections he did not intend to vote for any candidate who would not pledge himself distinctly to use every effort to change the present Education Act into a national instead of a denominational one. (Cheers.) He would never pay an educational rate under the present system. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. M. HEATH (Hackney), expressed his regret that Mr. Picton was not present. Some of them had fought a battle for him in London and won it. Many of them had been sent to Coventry because they supported Mr. Picton on the purely secular principle, but Dr. Raleigh had nobly stood by them, and now they were all of one mind.

The Rev. SONLEY JOHNSTONE (Merthyr), wished to strengthen the resolution by the addition of one word. When it was proposed by Mr. Gladstone to separate the denominational schools from the school boards he suggested that, as a compensation, they should have an increase in the grant; and he had heard it rumoured that there might be some such offer made in reference to this matter, that the 25th Clause would be repealed, but additional money be given from the Consolidated Fund. Then, again, he knew of one school board that had already framed a bye-law providing that the fees should be paid not for the children of indigent parents, but only for such children as passed the Government examination, and upon this plea, that the money would then be given for purely secular education. That there might be no misunderstanding and no misrepresentation in future, he should like to have inserted the word "unconditional" to bring forward a motion for the unconditional repeal of the 25th Clause of the Elementary Education Act.

The Rev. Mr. CROSSKEY: The committee accept that alteration.

Mr. DALE said it might not be known that Mr. Harvey Adams, who was recently prosecuted for declining to pay the school-rate at Fenton, was on the platform. (Cheers.) Mr. Adams's goods had been seized on Monday. (Cheers.) The bailiffs had taken a weather-glass, and he was told that its index was pointing to "stormy." (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr. HARVEY ADAMS, of Fenton, supported the resolution. On coming forward he met with a very enthusiastic reception at the hands of the meeting. As the chairman shook hands with Mr. Adams, there were some cries of "The first victim!" followed by loud cheers. Mr. Adams described himself as the uncompromising friend of secular education, leaving the churches to undertake the work of religious education.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

#### STATE GRANTS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

The Rev. CHARLES WILLIAMS, of Accrington, read a paper on "State grants for educational purposes." He stated that in the thirty-one years previous to the passing of the Education Act, 1870, grants were made for the building of 5,016 schools, and the enlarging of 2,319, and after the passing of the Act applications were made within a very short period for 5,000 additional grants. In 1870 there were 10,214 religious day schools in receipt of State aid, and the Education Act would make that number into 15,600. Nonconformists demanded that the State should cease to aid these schools. Mr. Robert Lowe—would that Mr. Forster would change places with him—(cheers)—declared the other day, that in promoting a denominational system the Government had made a great mistake. If so, the Government should repent the blunder, and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." (Cheers.) The system failed where education was most needed—in the agricultural districts. In 1867 there were 8,219 parishes receiving support from Government with populations less than 5,000 each; 7,915 of these were with-

out a State-aided school, and even if there were a school in the parish, in the case of an overwhelming majority, such a school would be controlled by clergyman, and the Privy Council would refuse a second Nonconformist school because of the smallness of the population, and they would be bound to place the education of Dissenters' children under the control of parish priests. (Hear, hear.) Certainly there was a conscience clause, but, with Archdeacon Denison, some of them believed this clause was an invention of the devil. (Laughter and cheers.) Wherever public funds were distributed, whether in day-schools or colleges, the end should be unsectarian. The Scotch Kirk and the Free Church demanded that a catechism should be taught in the public schools. But had not the Irish Catholic an equal claim with the Scotch Presbyterian and the English Episcopalian to the support of his denominational day-school? Religious equality required the aid of all or none. The Wesleyan Education Committee had recently passed a very decisive motion against State aid to denominational schools in Ireland. Protestant Episcopalians sympathised with Irish Protestants, and most of them denounced the anticipated compliance with Cardinal Cullen's demand. Methodists to a man repudiated Government grants to Romanism. But how could they protest with their own hands full of State money to be spent on denominational schools? It was impossible that the Wesleyans should sell Ireland to the priests for the miserable pittance of 40,000*l.*, received in the shape of an annual grant in aid of their day-schools. Nonconformists, too, had something to sacrifice before they could consistently oppose the subsidising of the Roman Catholic schools in Ireland. They should not tolerate that anything should be taught in schools against any man's conscience, be he Christian, Turk, infidel, or Jew. (Cheers.) Let no one be fearful of the effects of pure secularism in State education.

If we take a firm stand, not as Nonconformists, but as Englishmen, on the simple and broad principle of secularism in State education, we cannot fail to win over to our side the people of England, and then we shall witness the conversion of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, though "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle" than for Mr. Forster to become a real Liberal in matters educational. We should cast in our lot with the party of progress, contending (1) for public, as distinguished from denominational management of public elementary schools; and (2) that, in public schools, secular instruction only be given by the salaried teachers, or by any other person, in school hours. Protestant Nonconformists may thus once again take their place in the front rank of the men who fight for liberty, and render real and effective service to what Mr. Lowe eloquently describes as "the great, the noble, the holy cause of the education of the children of the poor." (Loud cheers.)

Professor F. E. ANTHONY, M.A., moved the following resolution:—

That this conference protests against the payment of public money to schools under private, irresponsible, and denominational management, as inconsistent with the due recognition of the principles of religious equality, and as rendering impossible the development of a truly national system of education, and is of opinion that all public money voted for the purposes of education should be administered through representatives of the people popularly elected.

That this conference is of opinion that in any national system of education, the School Board and the State should make provision solely for the secular instruction which all children may receive in common, and that the responsibility of the religious education of each district (which in every case should be given by teachers other than those employed in the ordinary work of public schools) should be thrown upon voluntary effort.

In this resolution, he remarked, they had put forward very forcibly the indictment which they entered against the Education Act. By a most extraordinary inconsistency that Act, which was carried as an unsectarian Act, was supporting not unsectarian but sectarian schools. (Hear.) Under the present system of inspection of schools they could not learn what dogmas were taught, and we had schools receiving public money which were irresponsible to those from whom they received it. They believed that in this agitation a process of education was being carried on which would end in the realisation of "a free Church in a free State." (Cheers.)

The Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL seconded the resolution. He said he believed that this conference would have given an answer to the accusation contained in that day's *Times* by the Bishop of Gloucester, who asserted that they were claiming not equality, but supremacy. The tone of the discussion had been the assertion of equal rights, and no supremacy for any party in the State.

The Rev. ALFRED TILLY (Cardiff) moved that the latter part of the first of the two combined resolutions should read thus:—

Demands that, after due notice, no public money shall be voted for the purposes of education except to schools administered through representatives of the people popularly elected.

The Rev. F. SONLEY JOHNSTONE (Merthyr) in seconding the amendment, suggested that Mr. Tilly should include in it the following alteration in the third resolution:—

That the conference insists, that in any national system of education, the school board and the State shall make provision solely for the secular instruction, which all children may receive in common, that the responsibility of the religious education of every district shall be left to voluntary effort, and that no religious instruction shall be given by the teachers of elementary schools in their official capacity, or in connection with the work of the public schools.

Mr. MIALL, M.P., put it very earnestly to the good sense and to the patriotism of the assembly to get into no wrangling about verbal alterations. The resolution had been drawn up by those who had given great time to the considera-

tion of all the phases of the subject of which they treated.

Mr. DALE said the mover and seconder were prepared to accept a slight change in the second resolution, which would read as follows:—"And we, therefore, claim that all public moneys voted for the purpose of education should be administered through representatives of the people popularly elected." That was something more than an expression of opinion, and he trusted Mr. Johnstone would accept it. As to the second amendment, he assured the conference that the very utmost care had been given by the conference committee in determining the form in which the resolutions should be submitted to the conference. Mr. Johnstone's amendment would leave the matter open to the most dangerous abuses in the appointment of schoolmasters. Mr. Johnstone's language would not prevent a bargain between sects and schoolmasters that he should practically teach their faith, though not exactly within school hours, and not, it might be said, *ex officio*. They were anxious that the schoolmaster of the parish should never be at the disposal of the predominant sect in the parish for teaching the creed of the predominant sect in the building which the parish erected. He accepted the change in the second resolution.

The Rev. ALFRED TILLY disclaimed any desire to introduce discord, and expressed his willingness to accept the modification of the resolution suggested by the Rev. R. W. Dale. (Hear, hear.)

The mover and seconder of the resolution having agreed to the alteration submitted by the Rev. R. W. Dale, the first portion was put and unanimously carried.

Mr. JOHNSTONE then moved as an amendment the third resolution in the terms which he had previously suggested.

Mr. JOSEPH SPENCER seconded the amendment, believing that the restriction put upon the schoolmaster by the resolution involved doing that which, as Nonconformists, they had been professing against the State doing all their lives.

The Rev. ROBERT HARLEY (Leicester) suggested the withdrawal of the parenthetical clause, "which in every case should be given by teachers other than those employed in the ordinary work of public schools." If a schoolmaster would give religious instruction voluntarily, they had no more right to exclude him than any other man. If they carried the resolution in the form presented, he felt that they would place themselves in a wrong position.

Mr. JOHNSTONE withdrew his amendment in favour of the suggestion of Mr. Harley.

The Rev. ROBERT BRUCE (Huddersfield) supported Mr. Harley's suggestion.

Mr. CROSSKEY said the meaning of the clause in brackets practically was that if they permitted a sect to employ a national school teacher they would shut up the profession of a teacher to a sectarian class. The sect would engage the same teacher, and would have him as their servant. That was the great point, which must be absolutely prevented.

Mr. BRUCE said that according to the parenthesis no teacher could be a Sunday-school teacher. (No, no.)

Mr. R. W. DALE said that it had never entered into the minds of those who drew the resolution, that any schoolmaster should be prevented from voluntarily giving religious instruction to any children that he might be able to induce to receive it, either on a week, out of school hours, or on a Sunday. (Hear.) Why they were anxious to prevent was the employment of the schoolmaster by a sect to give religious instruction. (Hear.) They desired that he should not be made the salaried servant of a sect. (Hear, hear.) The omission of the parenthetical sentence would leave the whole case open. They might omit the words in brackets, and perhaps the case would be fully met if they read the resolution with similar words added to it thus:—

The responsibility of the religious education of each district should be thrown upon voluntary effort; but the teacher engaged in the ordinary work of the public school shall not be employed for that purpose.

Considerable discussion followed upon this point, and ultimately Mr. DALE said though the secretaries felt strongly, for the reasons he had stated, that it was a mistake, they were willing, for the sake of unanimity, to omit the bracketed clause.

Eventually the resolution, with the exclusion of the parenthetical clause, was put to the meeting and passed unanimously, and the conference adjourned.

#### THURSDAY MORNING SITTING.

The conference resumed its sittings on Thursday morning at half-past ten o'clock. It being impossible to hire the Free-trade Hall, in consequence of its previous occupancy for other purposes, the meeting was held in the Friends' Meeting House, which was again crowded with delegates, and great difficulty was found in keeping the aisles clear. Mr. W. Middlemore, Birmingham, presided.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the meeting, said they should have been incredulous had they been told two years ago that nearly 2,000 delegates, representing Nonconformists from all parts of the country, would ere long assemble in Manchester to seek the redress of injustice inflicted on them by a Liberal Government, and to devise means for their future protection. (Hear, hear.) But so it was; and from the spirit manifested by the conference he might safely predicted that the association now formed would be maintained till the wrongs of which they



complained were no more. (Cheers.) He should make no apology for applying the few remarks he should make chiefly to the recent educational policy of the Government, though that subject had been discussed on the previous day, because on this their chief difference with the Government had arisen, and on their future action in regard to this matter it depended whether they retained Nonconformist support or not. In respect to the Elementary Education Act, two grave errors were committed; first, in not making the board schools absolutely unsectarian; and next, in not leaving the denominational system alone. By permitting sectarianism in the board schools on the one hand, and enlarging the grants to denominational schools, and increasing their number, on the other, they had caused the present chaos, alienated their best friends, and brought their motives into suspicion, and their statesmanship into contempt. (Cheers.) It could not be pleaded that this injurious Act was passed in ignorance or inadvertence—(Hear, hear); for memorials and petitions, signed by several thousands of Nonconformist ministers, were presented to the Government and the House of Commons, pointing out the injustice of various of its enactments and the insuperable objections to them, but all in vain. (Cheers.) By the aid of the Tories the Government forced their measure through Parliament; and they saw the result. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") A huge system of concurrent endowment had been established, and, until the Act should be amended, a national system of education had been rendered impossible. (Cheers.) But, bad as the act was, its administration had made bad worse. (Cheers.) In the hands of Mr. Forster, the evil genius of education—(laughter and cheers)—the whip had become a scorpion; and, to justify this opinion, they had only to refer to the manifest partisanship of the Education Department, and especially to its conduct in regard to the payment of fees to denominational schools. (Cheers.) The denominational system had been well described by Mr. Lowe as a great and gross mistake. They agreed with him. But why, then, they might fairly ask, did the Ministry of which he was a member strengthen [and extend it? Why increase the grants to denominational schools? Why create several thousand new ones? Why administer the Act in the interests of denominationalism? History might have told Mr. Lowe that the Government which perpetuated instead of correcting "great and gross mistakes" was self-doomed to destruction. By the creation of new denominational schools, and by the Tory schemes of the Endowed School Commissioners, the influence of the Tory party would be enormously increased, and the Liberal difficulties correspondingly aggravated. For this the Ministry were responsible, and if their policy should be maintained they would have to stand at the bar of public opinion, charged with having betrayed their trust—(Hear, hear), and played into the hands of the Tories. It was useless to deny that an impression was gaining ground that national interests in the matter of education were being subordinated to the ecclesiastical proclivities of some members of the Government. (Hear, hear.) But whatever might be the conduct of the Liberals towards the Cabinet, the course of Nonconformists was clear. (Cheers.) Henceforth no Ministry would have their support that did not apply the principles of religious equality to every measure that came before Parliament affecting the interests of the various denominations—nor if appointments affecting them should not be shared in common by Churchmen and Nonconformists. By their conduct in these and such cases they would stand or fall; and their policy towards the Government would be determined by the policy of the Government towards them. (Cheers.) In fine, they should ask to be made at one with their Episcopal fellow-countrymen—(cheers)—to stand erect by their side; to share with them the responsibilities and duties, the rights and privileges of citizenship; to labour with them for the common good, and to live with them in fraternal intercourse—a patriotic and Christian demand which they should soon see conceded, in spite of the interested opposition of statesmen or clergy. (Renewed cheering.)

#### THE POLITICAL RELATIONS OF THE NONCONFORMISTS TO THE LIBERAL PARTY.

Mr. H. RICHARD, M.P., who on rising was received with a round of cheering, the whole audience rising, opened the discussion on this subject by reading the following paper. He said:—

There seems some ambiguity in speaking of the relations of the Nonconformists to the Liberal party, seeing that the Nonconformists themselves, to a large extent, constitute the Liberal party in this country. (Hear, hear.) But by the "Liberal party" probably it was intended we should understand the leaders of that party in Parliament, whether in or out of office; and it is in that sense that I shall use the expression in this paper. There is an impression prevalent in many quarters, both inside and outside our own ranks, that the Nonconformists are so largely indebted to the Liberal party, in the sense I have defined, that hardly any amount of self-denial or self-sacrifice can be too great to testify their gratitude for those services. (A laugh.) On the other hand, there are those who maintain that the Nonconformists have clung so firmly and faithfully to the changing fortunes of the Liberal party, through evil report and good report, and have worked so strenuously for its principles and objects, that their claims have never

been so fully recognised as they ought to have been, but that there has been, and that there is still, a disposition to treat them habitually with neglect, if not with something like disdain. In order, therefore, to solve this question, it will be necessary to take a brief retrospect of the past, that, by a careful collation of facts and as impartial an exercise of our judgment on those facts as we can command, we may try to ascertain on which side the balance of obligation lies. How long may what is called the Liberal party be said to have existed in England? Well, from the time of the Revolution of 1688 certainly the distinction of Whig and Tory has prevailed—a distinction supposed, and rightly supposed, to represent a difference of principle as well as of name; and from that time the Nonconformists have allied themselves politically with the Whigs, and never, as far as I know, have they been charged with unfaithfulness to that alliance. (Hear, hear.) Nor can we deny—nay, we gladly and gratefully acknowledge—that there are some illustrious names connected with the Whig party, whom we must ever hold in gratitude and veneration for their defence of the principles of religious liberty, and to some extent for their practical assertion and advocacy of the civil and political rights of Dissenters. Such are the names of Lord Somers, Bishop Burnett, Charles James Fox, Lord Holland, and Lord John Russell. (Cheers.) But I think it clear, from a survey of the past, that the Liberal party have been willing to serve the Nonconformists only when they could do so with perfect safety to their own interests, and that whenever those interests have been in jeopardy the claims of the Dissenters have been postponed or set aside without much scruple or compunction. When William III. ascended the throne, the Nonconformists were practically outlaws in their own country. By a series of Acts as despotic and infamous as ever dishonoured the statute-book of any nation professing to be free—the Act of Uniformity, the Corporation Act, the Conventicle Act, the Five-mile Act, and the Test Act,—they had been deprived of nearly all their rights as citizens on account of their religion, and were exposed to such disabilities, penalties, and persecutions as might well have crushed them, but for the operation of the principle so well expressed by the poet Wordsworth—

He who would force the soul, tilts with a straw  
Against a champion cased in adamant.

(Cheers.) It was acknowledged on all hands that the conduct of the Nonconformists during the reign of James II., when they sacrificed their own rights to the weal of the nation, and the prompt, cordial, and unanimous support which they gave to the Prince of Orange at a time when nearly the whole body of the clergy held aloof from him or repudiated his claims, had contributed largely to that happy settlement which laid the foundation of our national liberties, and entitled them to the warm gratitude of all the friends of constitutional freedom. (Hear, hear.) The King himself was conscious of this, and when he met the two Houses of the Legislature in 1688 he earnestly recommended that the Test and Corporation Acts should be abolished, and bills embodying these and other provisions were prepared and introduced to Parliament. At that time the great Whig families were completely in the political ascendant, and yet, says the historian of the Free Churches, "the clauses for abolishing the sacramental test was thrown out in the Lords by the votes of the Whigs, and the votes of Whigs decided the fate of the Corporation Bill in the Commons," so that the disabilities which these were meant to remove remained saddled on the shoulders of the Dissenters 140 years longer. This was done, not because the Whig leaders doubted the justice of the Nonconformists' claims, but because it was thought more expedient to conciliate the disaffection of the Jacobite clergy than to reward the tried loyalty of the Dissenters. (Hear, hear.) All that the Nonconformists got was a Toleration Act—(cheers)—the very name of which was an insult—(cheers)—which gave them little more than a bare permission to exist, but to exist still proscribed, disqualified, fettered, and branded with many humiliating marks of civil and political inferiority. During the Tory reaction in the reign of Queen Anne there were two what were called Occasional Conformity Bills introduced into Parliament, conceived in the bitterest spirit of hostility to the Nonconformists, and intended to withdraw from them some of the few and partial concessions made by the Toleration Act. The first of these, brought forward in 1702, would have absolutely precluded Dissenters from being members of any corporation. But the Whigs, we are told, in many parts of the country where the corporations, as was the case at that time, returned members to Parliament, were to a great extent dependent for their election on the Dissenting members of those corporations. They therefore fought against the bill with stubborn tenacity, and defeated it. But in 1711 another Occasional Conformity Bill was introduced. It provided that no person who did not conform to the Church should be capable of holding any civil or military office; that if, after his admission to such an office, any person should be found in a conventicle or any religious meeting consisting of more than ten persons, other than one conducted according to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church, he should forfeit the sum of forty pounds, and be disabled for the future from holding any offices. This naturally excited the greatest alarm among the Nonconformists, who repaired to those with whom they had been accustomed to act politically, and entreated them to oppose the bill. But not a voice was lifted up by their Whig allies against this nefarious measure, and it passed through the House of Commons in three days, without a protest or a division. (Shame.) And why? Because it was necessary to sacrifice the Dissenters to party necessities. The Whigs could not regain power without the aid of the Earl of Nottingham, and he would not join them unless they consented to pass the Occasional Conformity Bill. The bargain, therefore, was struck, and, in spite of the earnest entreaties and remonstrances of the Nonconformists, they were treated as if beneath contempt, the Whigs ignoring their services, and the Tories exulting in their disgrace. But, without further entering into details, we may say that, in the language of Lord Macaulay, "the Whig party had, during seventy years, an almost uninterrupted possession of power." It was a critical time in the history of the nation, for it was the time when the new dynasty was struggling for existence and stability. The whole

body of the Dissenters rallied round the House of Hanover as with the heart of one man. During the Church and Stuart rebellion of 1715 they were acknowledged to have rendered services of inestimable value to the Government. Charles James Fox, referring to the part they took then and in 1745, says: "During those rebellious periods the Dissenters had acted with the spirit and fidelity of British subjects, zealous and vigilant in defence of the constitution; at both those periods they stood forward the champions of British liberty, and obtained an eminent share in repelling the foe of the House of Hanover. Their exertions then were so magnanimous that I have no scruple to assert that to their endeavours we owe the preservation of Church and State." (Laughter.) And yet during those seventy years, when the Whigs were in power and the Nonconformists were of such service to the State, scarcely anything was attempted, and still less was done, to vindicate their rights and to redress their wrongs. During twenty of those years, Sir Robert Walpole, who has been called "the glory of the Whigs, was in power. Again and again did the leaders of Dissent apply to him to relieve them of their disabilities, and again and again were they put off with insincere promises, or bluntly and rudely repelled. At the general election in 1734, when a determined effort was made to return a House which would expel him from office, the whole strength of the Dissenters was exerted, and successfully exerted, to keep him in power. But when, shortly after, a deputation from the Dissenters waited upon him to remind him of the promise he had often given to help in relieving them from the tests which oppressed them so grievously, he replied that the time was not yet arrived. Dr. Chandler, who headed the deputation, said, "You have so repeatedly returned this answer, that I trust you will give me leave to ask when the time will come?" (Laughter.) "If you require a specific answer," said Walpole, "I will give it you in a word—never." Indeed, his conduct cannot be better characterised than in the words of Lord Macaulay himself, by no means a passionate friend of Dissenters. The language he uses is very significant, and seems to me to have an application to other times than the reign of the Georges, and to other Ministries than that of Sir Robert Walpole:—

"He had been brought up," says Lord Macaulay, "in the school of toleration, at the feet of Somers and of Burnett. He disliked the shameful laws against Dissenters. But he never could be induced to bring forward a proposition for repealing them. The sufferers represented to him the injustice with which they were treated, boasted of their firm attachment to the House of Brunswick and to the Whig party, and reminded him of his own repeated declaration of goodwill to their cause. He listened, assented, promised, and did nothing. At length the question was brought forward by others, and the Minister, after a hesitating and evasive speech, voted against it. If the Dissenters had been turbulent he would probably have relieved them; but while he apprehended no danger from them he would not run the slightest risk for their sakes."

(Loud cheers.) So discouraged had the Dissenters been by their abortive efforts to obtain something like justice during the long reign of the Liberal party, that for many years afterwards they seemed to have made no attempt to bring their claims again before the country or Parliament. But in the year 1787 the Committee of Deputies determined once more to appeal to the Legislature for the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts. The question was taken up by Mr. Beaufoy, a name never to be mentioned by us without respect and gratitude. Perhaps we have a little too much forgotten in these days what the nature and operation of those laws were from which our loyal forefathers so long and so vainly struggled for deliverance. They cannot be exhibited in a more striking form than by one short quotation from the speech of Mr. Beaufoy, who led the cause of the Dissenters in the House of Commons. He cites the case of John Howard as an illustration of the working of those laws, who, as you know, was a Dissenter:

"He," said the speaker, "upon whom every kingdom in Europe, England excepted, would gladly confer at least the common privileges of a citizen, and whom the proudest nation might be happy to call her own; he of whom a right honourable member of this House (Mr. Burke) has said, 'He has visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces or the stateliness of temples, not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to take a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, nor to collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depths of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression and contempt; to remember the forgotten and attend the neglected; to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of men in all countries.'—he, even he, is denied in England, the common rights of a subject; he is incapable of legal admission into any office; and the consequence is that, his zeal for his country having led him a few years since to brave the penalties of the law, and to serve her in a troublesome and expensive civil employment without the sacramental qualification which his religious persuasion would not permit him to take, the penalties of the Test Act are still hanging over him, and I fear that even now, on his return to his native country, amid the plaudits of an admiring world, it is in the power of any desperate informer who is willing to take that road to wealth and damnation—(laughter)—which the Legislature has pointed out and recommended to his choice,—I fear it is in the power of every such informer to prosecute him to conviction, and to bring upon him those dreadful penalties which contribute to the punishment of an outlaw."

Such were the laws which, at the end of a century from the time of the Revolution, during by far the greater part of which the Liberal party had been in power, still lay like an incubus upon the social and political life of the Nonconformists. Then, indeed, came a period when the leaders of that party in Parliament acquitted themselves in such sort as to demand that they should be held by us in honourable and everlasting remembrance. Session after session did Mr. Fox especially, undeterred by repeated failures and growing unpopularity—for in that howling storm of ignorance and passion which rose after the first French Revolution every man who lifted up his voice in favour of liberty was covered with obloquy—continue in strains of the noblest eloquence, and on the loftiest principles of religious equality, to denounce the iniquitous laws against Dissenters and to demand their repeal. That effort was also unsuccessful; but in this instance certainly not from want of courage, earnestness, and devotion on the part of those who espoused the cause of the Nonconformists in Parliament. For thirty-eight years after that not a voice was lifted up in Parliament in favour of Dissenting claims. At length Lord John

(Continued on Page 118.)



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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"W. Griffith." Next week.

Several other communications are necessarily deferred in consequence of the pressure on our space.

\* Our number for Jan. 3 is out of print, but the Supplement on the Condition of the Rural Districts will be sent separately, on the receipt of two postage-stamps.

## The Nonconformist.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1872.

## SUMMARY.

NEXT Tuesday the Parliamentary campaign will commence; but the opening session will not receive the *clat* which is derived from the presence of the Sovereign. The leaders of the two great parties have issued the traditional circulars. Mr. Disraeli's invitation to his supporters is of the usual formal character, but as the right hon. gentlemen has decided upon a series of out-door meetings in Lancashire during the Easter week, we may presume that he is in a hopeful frame of mind, and is prepared for active operations in the interests of the Conservative party. The customary banquets which precede the fray will take place on Monday, and it is announced that the address of the Commons in reply to the Queen's speech will be moved by Mr. Strutt, a member for North Derbyshire, and seconded by Mr. Colman, one of the members for Norwich.

It is not stated that Colonel Akroyd is to give a dinner to his Parliamentary friends in connection with the coming session, though he has announced his wish, if not his intention, to form a "Constitutional Liberal" party, to embrace all who desire to maintain individual liberty, and to preserve monarchy and the Church, but "are willing to promote any reform or any improvement consistent with the broad outline and landmarks of our history and constitution." The hon. member's manifesto is very appropriately addressed to a supporter of Mr. Ripley, of Bradford. It suggested that action with a view to this new departure should at once be taken in that town—that in fact a kind of Ripleyite "cave" should be formed, and a new banner unfurled. It would seem, however, that Mr. Akroyd and his sympathisers so quickly realised the difficulties of forming a new party in the State, and met with so little encouragement, that they hastily pulled down their new flag, went over to the Tory camp, and have ranged themselves among the adherents of Mr. Powell, the Conservative candidate for the North-West Riding. Who will deny that they are in their proper place?

Many noteworthy speeches on education, outside the Manchester Conference, have been delivered during the week. Lord Salisbury, at a meeting in the same city on Monday, and apparently replying to Earl Russell, derided the notion of unsectarian religion, and said "any one must see that the power of Christianity had arisen from the dogmas it had preached." The conscience clause is, in his lordship's view—and we thank him for the admission—a sham; and he agrees with Lord Russell that little children cannot have liberty from dogma in Church schools. "Does Lord Salisbury fail to see," pertinently asks the *Echo*, "that no speech delivered at the Manchester Conference, is one-half as useful to the League as that which he uttered on Monday at the Queen's Hotel?" The Under Secretary for the Colonies has been speaking at Sand-

wich in quite a different vein, and we regret our inability to copy his fervid and extraordinary address in full. Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen strongly objects to any alteration of the Education Act. While the Education League is for national education and religious liberty, he is for national liberty and religious education, and "considering the religious character of the people of England," he declares it to be "a greater offence against liberty and a greater tyranny to deny them the right to support by their rates a religious system of education than to follow the principles laid down in the Education Act."—a very unique mode of begging the question. His church—which is the same as that of the Marquis of Salisbury—teaches him, he says, "to deal tenderly and lovingly with the consciences of other men." Has Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen ever been in Wales? However, he is prepared to stand by his Church, and to resist any "jealous" attacks on her, though he may be driven from Parliament and the Government from office; for it is because the Church has done so much for education and religion that there is now a movement to disestablish her. All Liberal members are not of the same way of thinking as the zealous Under-Secretary for the Colonies. Amongst those who have occupied the platform during the week, we notice that Mr. Otway, Mr. Whitwell, Dr. Brewer, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Phillips, have one and all, while professing loyalty to the Government, pointed out the imperative necessity of amending the Education Act.

As to other domestic topics, we can only remark that the *Megera* Commission has come to an end, but that the Tichborne trial has not. It seems to be less difficult for the Attorney-General to unravel the intricacies of the plot of the strange drama with which the Court of Common Pleas is concerned, than for Lord Lawrence and his colleagues to trace home, through the various departments of the Admiralty, personal responsibility for the loss of the ill-fated troopship.

The French news of the week, though interesting, is not of first-rate importance. The National Assembly is voting the least objectionable of the new imposts, but has settled nothing relative to the proposed taxes on raw materials, which occasioned the late constitutional crisis. This week a new difficulty will have to be confronted. The Commercial Treaty with England has been reported against by the bureaux. The feeling in the Chamber against its abrogation is growing stronger daily, and but for the fact that M. Thiers might once again abdicate his functions, it is probable that the Assembly would absolutely decline to sanction the Government proposal to give the required year's notice of the termination of a convention which has proved so beneficial to the industry of France. The Count de Chambord has issued another manifesto to the French people, but the press altogether declines to notice his marvellous promises, or to regard him as of any consequence in political matters. The report that the President, in despair of raising sufficient money to meet the enormous liabilities of France, is lending a favourable ear to the suggestion of increasing the revenue by legalising the introduction of gaming-tables in the various watering-places, is too incredible to be believed.

In Prussia, Dr. Falk, who is greatly distrusted by the Ultramontanes, replaces Herr Müller as Minister of Public Worship, and his appointment was the subject of an interesting debate in the Berlin Diet yesterday. In the course of the discussion Prince Bismark justified the abolition of the Catholic Department in connection with that office, and condemned the unpatriotic spirit of the Ultramontane clergy. "Let us hold ourselves aloof," said the Minister, "from these theological quarrels, which derive their sustenance from the hierarchy"—advice which might be taken to heart even by British statesmen.

## AMERICAN CLAIMS UNDER THE WASHINGTON TREATY.

THE English people, and surely we may add, the Americans also, have somewhat prematurely congratulated themselves and each other on the presumed effects of the Washington Treaty. It seems that the advantage anticipated from it—the extinction of all differences between them by an amicable adjustment of them by an International Tribunal of Arbitration—is threatened to be neutralised by the smartness of diplomatists, jurists, and politicians on the other side of the water. We glanced at this danger in the observations we made on the matter three weeks ago. We expressed the regret we deeply felt that in the American Case the contention should be that in regard to what are generically characterised as the

Alabama claims, England should have been held responsible for consequential damages. We are not aware that any fuller information than that which was then before us has since been communicated to the British public. Certain it is, however, that the organs of public opinion in the United Kingdom, led principally by the *Times*, have suddenly and simultaneously lifted this part of the case into great importance. It may be that party reasons, or it may be that patriotic reasons, are felt in some quarters to be increasingly urgent on the eve of a new Parliamentary session, but we cannot but suspect that there exists in some minds a strong disposition to get rid, if it be possible, of the Washington Treaty altogether.

The claims upon England put forward in the American case, as we have before remarked, are to be gathered chiefly, if not exclusively, from the *résumé* of the *New York Times*. The case itself is in few hands. Enough of it, however, is known to make the British public aware that the demands submitted to the tribunal at Geneva, even if actually sustained by the words of the Washington Treaty, are too extravagant to have been put forward by the late American Commissioners, or to have been accepted in principle by the English Commissioners. They are, if we may so say, an inflation to the utmost possible limits which even legal ingenuity could define, of language which, interpreted by the obvious and well-understood meaning of the parties to the treaty, admits of but one meaning. The treaty contains an agreement to submit to the tribunal of arbitration the claims of the United States "growing out of the acts" of the Alabama and other vessels of the same character. What are the claims set forth by the American case, as coming within the scope of these terms? They are the following:—Direct losses growing out of the destruction of vessels and their cargoes by the insurgent cruisers; the national expenditure in pursuit of those cruisers; the loss in the transfer of the American commercial marine to the British flag; the enhanced payments of insurance; the prolongation of the war; and the addition of a large sum to the cost of the war and the suppression of the rebellion.

Now, even if it be admitted that the treaty has been loosely worded, and that under the terms of it these monstrous claims may be logically ranged, it is quite certain that the latter were never contemplated by the British Commissioners. Nor do we think that they were, in anything like this amplitude, within the purview of the American Commissioners. They could hardly consist with "an amicable settlement." Some of them are beyond any cognisable rule of measurement. Nevertheless, there they are. For what purpose? To be seriously enforced on the attention of the arbitrators? To answer domestic purposes? To serve, as counts do in an indictment, to bring out into distinct relief every possible phase of the question in dispute? We cannot tell. Time will decide. But should President Grant really intend to make these demands in all earnestness, the words of his message to Congress in reference to this matter may be dismissed as an empty flourish—because, as we remarked in a former article, "the doctrine of consequential damages is one which, if it were upheld, would make neutrality in time of war more irksome and more dangerous than the position of a belligerent."

Be the reason what it may which has prevailed upon the American Government to set forth these claims for compensation, the nature of several of them is anything but creditable, anything but friendly. We can hardly believe that they fairly represent, either in the manner in which they have been developed, or in the extent to which they have been pushed, the real wishes of the American people. It is not known as yet what course the British Government will pursue. Their case was drawn up in anticipation of that of the Americans, and they naturally did not anticipate so intolerable a perversion of the spirit of the Washington Treaty. Whether they will refuse to unite in submitting such novel international pretensions to arbitration, or whether, having demurred to the authority of the arbitrators to consider them, they will await the decision of the tribunal, reserving to themselves liberty to reject it if adverse, the public is not yet informed. Hitherto they have managed to preserve the peace, and in this respect, all parties confide in their good intentions. Should the experiment to substitute arbitration for war as a means of adjusting international differences fail in the present instance—which we still confidently hope it will not—the Government at Washington will have made itself responsible for that failure, and will have earned for itself the reputation of having wantonly destroyed the best hopes of the civilised world.



## THE NORTH-WEST RIDING ELECTION.

THE election to choose a successor to the lamented Sir Francis Crossley, takes place next Tuesday. Though the West Riding constituency is not so emphatically, as was once the case, the premier constituency of the United Kingdom—having, indeed, been cut in twain by the last Reform Act—the Northern Division can still boast of being one of the most important districts of England in respect to industrial enterprise and wealth, and of numbering some 17,000 voters. At the first election after this partition, Lord Frederick Cavendish and Sir Francis Crossley were returned unopposed for the North-West Riding—both it hardly need be said Liberals; but the first representing the Whig landed proprietors and moderates, and the second, the industry and advanced opinion of the constituency. It might have been thought that on the occurrence of a vacancy by the decease of Sir Francis, a like-minded politician would take his place. But the Tories of North-West Yorkshire have stepped in, and resolved to try their chance.

Mr. F. S. Powell, a Conservative Churchman, has hence been induced to enter the lists against Mr. Isaac Holden, the chosen candidate of the Liberals, who is a Liberal Wesleyan. Inasmuch as this division of the West Riding was known a few years ago to give a majority of some 2,000 votes to the Liberal cause, Mr. Powell's friends must be reckoning either upon a great "Conservative reaction," or a defection from the other side. His address seems to be framed with a view rather to the latter than the former. It is studiously mild on those questions which have a party aspect; outspoken in reference to points on which Liberals are divided. Mr. Powell claims "rest" for the country, and deprecates further organic change; he upholds denominationalism in education, and is strongly opposed to the disestablishment of the State Church. He has since declared himself a convert to the Ballot—a question virtually settled in principle, though it would be desirable to know if Mr. Powell will support the Government bill, or only some proposal on the subject which will not amount to secret voting. "A man is known by the company he keeps," Mr. Powell has been for many years in Parliament, where he regularly, we believe, supported Mr. Disraeli. In fact, his votes were almost invariably in opposition to those of Sir Francis Crossley, whom he aspires to succeed.

Mr. Holden has also been a member of the House of Commons, and his votes were in accordance with those of the late member. He was, in fact, a zealous and consistent supporter of Liberal principles and measures; and having now been selected as the Liberal candidate, has a claim upon the whole party as the representative of the industrial section of the constituency. Mr. Holden supports, not only the Ballot, but the Government bill on the subject. He is strongly in favour of "arbitration in the settlement of national disputes"; he is convinced of the necessity of religious training for the young, but believes that the work will be best done by parents and "our numerous Christian churches." The Liberal candidate would, however, amend the Elementary Education Act of 1870 by including the general establishment of school boards and the removal of Clause 25. He would support any measure "tending to religious freedom and equality"; and give a cordial support to the present Government, "so long as it is loyal to the great principles upon which it was placed in power."

With such a reasonable programme, embodying the views notoriously held by the late Sir Francis, himself an advanced Liberal, but a general supporter of Mr. Gladstone, there could be no doubt of Mr. Holden's return but for the defection of some of the so-called moderate Liberals, who, disappointed that their favourite candidate was not fixed upon, take their revenge by going over to the Tory camp. That is not, indeed, the avowed ground of their secession. They ostensibly support Mr. Powell as "the more liberal" candidate of the two, because "Mr. Holden is in favour of what he is pleased to term 'Religious Equality,' which is neither more nor less than the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Church," and because he "favours the repeal of the 25th clause of the Education Act." If the Liberal electors are content to disclaim the principle of religious equality, which Mr. Gladstone has so emphatically accepted, and are opposed to an adequate system of national education, they will follow the lead of men who by their acts are tending, if not intending, to rend asunder the Liberal party, and, as in Plymouth, helping to return a Tory by way of showing their attachment to Liberal principles! Mr. Akroyd, we observe, aspires to form a new party—that of the "Constitutional Liberals"—but there is no evidence to show

that he and his friends represent more than a clique, though there is a certainty that they are diligently paving the way for a Tory Government.

Of course it suits Mr. Powell and his friends to raise the cry of "The Church in danger!" though his opponent does not desire to see disestablishment carried into effect till public opinion is ripe for it. That they should, by their present action, be hastening that issue is apparently of less concern to them than the opportunity of snatching a party triumph. Their success, as they well know, depends not so much upon the tortuous course of a few malcontent Liberals as upon the general bias of the moderate Liberals of the constituency. It is for the latter to decide whether there shall be a disruption of the party, and whether the adherents of religious equality are to be completely ostracised. They will not be likely to forget that the supporters of the State Church are already fairly represented by Lord Frederick Cavendish, and that to replace Sir Francis Crossley by a Conservative would be in violent antagonism with the Liberal traditions of the division. We can hardly believe it possible that the enlightened and liberty-loving electors of Yorkshire will declare by both their representatives that they are in favour of religious inequality. They themselves are, for the most part, sufficiently independent to be comparatively free from the practical evils of Church ascendancy, but it devolves upon them, as upon every great Liberal constituency, to be the champions and defenders of those less independent classes who, especially in rural districts, are exposed to galling annoyances of which Yorkshiremen have little conception. The question is one of simple justice to every section of the community, and justice, as well as mercy, "blesses him that gives and him that takes."

There can be no doubt that the issue of this election is a matter of peculiar interest, inasmuch as it may prove in the most practical way whether the union of the several sections of the Liberal party means simply a monopoly of political influence by the less advanced and less active portion. The "moderate" Liberals of the constituency are on their trial, and it devolves upon them to decide if the entire party is to be disintegrated. We can hardly suppose that they view with complacency those who are arrayed on the other side. The publicans and the clergy—the "bar" and the pulpit—are alike inspired with zeal against all who would encroach upon their privileges, and they form a sort of "Holy Alliance" in opposition to Mr. Holden, and, indeed, against all that is dear to Liberals. That gentleman's supporters are sanguine of success even against this coalition of publicans, parsons, and renegades; but the victory will not be won without earnest effort. Progressive principles will next Tuesday have a stiff wrestle with vested interests, but we believe there is muscle enough in Yorkshire to ensure success, and enough common sense to prevent Liberals from being seduced into playing the game of their opponents.

## WHAT SHALL WE DO IN INDIA?

FOR some time past considerable uneasiness has been felt in both official and unofficial quarters as to the state of public feeling in India. Lord Mayo, so long ago as the autumn of 1870, candidly confessed that there was in his judgment real cause for alarm; and very recently attention has been called to a minute by Lord Napier of Magdala, the publication of which is only explicable on the assumption that, in the opinion of the Supreme Government of India, a crisis is impending hardly less serious than that of 1857. Lord Napier, without circumlocution or disguise, points to the quarter in which "the cloud, little bigger than a man's hand," may be seen, and the presence of which on the horizon betokens the gathering of the coming storm. This blunt but singularly cautious soldier plainly states that in the next Indian war we shall have to fight our old and powerful allies, Scindia and Holkar. The reason he gives for his gloomy vaticination is the knowledge he professes to have acquired of certain military preparations which are being made by the two great Mahratta princes. Paradoxical as it may appear, we are disposed to think that Lord Napier's ground for apprehension contains in it much that is reassuring. He does not, for one moment, pretend to say that the Mahrattas are seething with disaffection, or that Gwalior and Indore are hotbeds of conspiracy; but he simply takes a soldier's view of the matter when he comes to the conclusion that the Mahratta Sovereigns would not play at soldiers or gather the *matériel* of war, unless they had an ulterior object in view. Mr. John Dickenson, who has sources of information at the courts

of the native States which are accessible to very few Englishmen, even of the highest official class, indignantly defends the two princes against the imputations which have been cast upon their loyalty; and in this opinion he is sustained by the testimony of a "Mussulman of Agra," who in Monday's *Times* vouches for the good faith of the Mahomedan chieftains, and triumphantly points to the splendid services which they rendered to the Crown in the memorable crisis of 1857.

We venture to think that the truth lies between the two extremes. There is not a shadow of evidence—so far as we can discover—to justify the theory that either Scindia or Holkar is deliberately plotting against the paramount Power. But there is reason to believe that both are distrustful of our intentions towards them, and whether their fears are well founded or not, the existence in their minds of this element of suspicion may well account for their putting their house in order against the evil day. For the proof of this statement we have not far to go. We are informed, on unquestionable authority, that last autumn Holkar privately despatched envoys to this country to ascertain, if that were possible, the real purpose of the British Government with regard to himself. In spite of the Queen's Proclamation he does not believe that his throne is secure. He looks upon a policy of annexation as only suspended—not permanently abandoned. He knows from a hundred examples in the past history of India that if the Supreme Government meditates an act of aggression against a tributary State no amount of prudence or watchfulness on its part can avert a catastrophe. Some pretext is never wanting; but, on the other hand, if the Mahratta Princes are thoroughly assured that the British Parliament and people will never again listen to the evil voice of the tempter who has so often betrayed them into sanctioning the ruin of their Indian allies, then we feel convinced that no danger from this quarter need be apprehended.

It is at this juncture—when so many circumstances conspire to excite anxiety for the security of our rule in Asia—that Mr. W. M. Torrens, the member for Finsbury, has published a series of "Confessions," which are as pregnant with instruction as they are eloquently and even dramatically written. Mr. Torrens begins with the earliest history of the East India Company, and he ends with the stupendous misdeeds of Lord Dalhousie. The story of oppression is unfolded chapter by chapter, until cumulative wrong is punished, if not expiated, by cumulative retribution. As we read this unvarnished chronicle of crime, we are astonished at the magnitude and consistency of the nefarious policy which has been pursued with unflinching persistence through successive generations; and, at the same time, we feel appalled at the repulsive image of ourselves which the historical mirror so faithfully reproduces. Mogul, Peishwa, Subahdar, Maharajah, Ameer, Nawab—it matters not what the title or the rank—all titles, all rank, all authority which the natives of India have been accustomed to venerate or to obey, have been made, in turn, to submit, not only to the foreign yoke, but to a cruel process of disruption and even of violent extinction.

But Mr. Torrens's object is not merely to tell the oft-told tale of British conquest and misrule in India. Everywhere in his work we find manifest indications of a policy of reparation and reconstruction. If he discourses on the native institutions of Panchayet and Adawlut, it is to show that something more than the germs of municipal self-government and trial by jury existed in the India with which Warren Hastings and Lord Clive made their countrymen acquainted. If he dwells upon the destruction of native principalities, it is to vividly portray the fact that many native rulers have exhibited the loftiest qualities of statesmanship, and that their subjects enjoyed in the highest degree the blessings of peace and contentment. Nor is this merely an historical retrospect; for we believe that, at the present moment, in the Hindoo province of Travancore, and in the territories of the able and accomplished Begum of Bhopal, the people enjoy a far larger amount of prosperity and happiness than in either of those three Presidencies which, as they are the oldest of the British possessions, ought to be the best governed. The moral is self-evident. It is that the independence of native States should be respected, and that the natives should more and more be entrusted with responsible administrative functions.

But this is not enough. Under the title of "Zulm"—which is the Persian word for "oppression"—Mr. Torrens has enumerated some recent examples of the confiscation policy which

\* "Empire in Asia. How we Came by it. A Book of Confessions." By W. M. Torrens, M.P. (London: Trübner.)



show that however the Dalhousian crusade against native States may be repudiated, the Dalhousian spirit yet continues to lurk behind the mask of conciliation and justice. The sleep of the living and not the sleep of the dead has overtaken that evil spirit; and therefore Mr. Torrens proposes the establishment in England of a tribunal which shall secure the native princes of India against sudden annexation or the stealthy encroachments of a practically irresponsible Government. He projects the formation of a permanent committee to be equally composed of members of both Houses of Parliament—a body which should have the power to review and if necessary to reverse any acts of the Suzerain which were alleged to contravene the rights of the tributary or feudatory princes of our great dependency. Whatever shape the proposed tribunal may ultimately take there is an irresistible concurrence of testimony as to the absolute necessity of imposing such a check upon the arbitrary action of the India Foreign Office and of the too servile registrar of its decrees, the India Council in London. Mere officialism has been tried in the balance and found wanting. There may as yet be no handwriting on the wall; but its fate, like that of Belshazzar, is sealed beyond hope of redemption. It must henceforth confine itself to its own proper work—that of wisely, justly, and economically administering the affairs of India; all else, involving the faith of treaties, the rights of succession, questions of boundary, and the maintenance of native dynasties and institutions, must be distinctly brought within the purview of Parliament. "If," says Mr. Torrens, "any man can devise a method to vindicate the solemn pledge of Parliament to India, to realise the plighted faith of the Queen, and to build up steadfast faith and hope in the princes and people of Asia, he need not trouble himself about being called a revolutionist; for he will have done the most anti-subversive thing which it is possible to conceive." A good deal more than this is, however, contemplated by the member for Finsbury. He wants to see native judges and magistrates multiplied in the regulation provinces; a true appreciation of the extreme poverty of the Indian people shown by a corresponding reduction of taxation; all necessary and reproductive public works paid for, not out of current expenditure, but by a system of terminable loans; and an honest attempt made to conciliate the Mahomedans by a prompt redress of their notorious grievances. Mr. Bright once said, "Take India as it is, the empire as it stands, and see if it is not possible to do something better with it than you have done before." It is not yet too late to profit by the counsel of one of the wisest and best of English statesmen.

**THE TURBERVILLE FUND.**—We are glad to learn that the fund raised for the widow and family of the late Mr. T. C. Turberville, editor of the *English Independent*, now amounts to over 2,000l.

**SLAVERY AND CIVIL WAR IN CUBA.**—On the afternoon of Tuesday, Jan. 23, an influential deputation waited upon Earl Granville, to urge upon Government the duty of interposing with Spain, in conjunction with the United States Government, with a view to secure the emancipation of the slave population of Cuba and Porto Rico, who are entitled to their liberty under the terms of treaty obligations with Great Britain, and, if possible, to terminate the terrible civil war now desolating Cuba. The Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society having read a memorial, Mr. Sturge called the attention of his lordship to the satisfactory and outspoken manner in which the United States Government had instructed their Minister at Madrid, General Sickles, to make abolition of slavery a *sine qua non* in his communications with the Spanish Government in reference to the settlement of the Cuban difficulty. Mr. Sturge also gave information, just received from Madrid, that a number of public meetings had recently been held in that city and in other chief towns of Spain, urging on their government to carry out the principles of the revolution of 1868 by the complete emancipation of the slaves in the Spanish colonies. He also expressed an earnest hope that the British Government would instruct Mr. Layard, as their representative at Madrid, to take a more decided course in promoting Cuban emancipation, and if possible to assist in rescuing the Spanish Ministry from the fatal course to which they appeared committed. Mr. Kinnaird and Mr. Gilpin having also spoken, Lord Granville informed the deputation that he concurred with many of the statements now made. He admitted that Spain had treaty obligations with us in reference to her slaves, and also that all efforts to secure the carrying out of these obligations had hitherto failed. But the English Government was desirous of exerting its influence on suitable occasions, and its representative at Madrid had not been wanting in his duty in reference to this subject. With regard to the atrocities in Cuba, he put aside the question of any interposition between Spain and her colonies on matters of such a delicate nature. After a few words from Mr. Tallack, the deputation thanked his lordship and withdrew.

## NONCONFORMIST CONFERENCE AT MANCHESTER.

(Continued from Page 115.)

Russell—I believe that notwithstanding some aberrations he is deserving of these cheers, and it is pleasant to see him in his old age coming back to the faith of his youth—(cheers)—in 1828, Lord John Russell, at the request of a large body of Nonconformists, and backed by all the weight of public opinion which they could bring to bear on the Legislature, introduced another motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which was carried. And thus, at last, did a large body of English citizens, who were acknowledged to be far more faithful to the Government and loyal to the Crown than many of the members of that Church whose members nevertheless enjoyed a monopoly of official patronage and power, and of all the honours and emoluments the State could confer, succeed, after 140 years of incessant struggle, not in attaining anything like civil and political equality, but of winning the bare privilege of being permitted to serve their country without renouncing their faith. And even then the bill which was founded on Lord John Russell's motion was marred by an offensive declaration, which, it has been admitted, was "not worth the paper on which it was written," but which, nevertheless, was maintained for nearly forty years longer, as the friends of the Church of England declared, merely "as a bribe upon the consciences of her opponents." When the Reform Bill of 1831-2 was brought forward the whole body of the Dissenters not only approved and accepted its provisions, but in every part of the country threw themselves among the foremost and most strenuous into that conflict out of doors which enabled the Liberal Government to encounter the formidable combination of interests by which it was assailed and resisted, and to pass it into law. Nay, indeed, Lord Russell has since roundly declared that "the Dissenters carried the Reform Bill." (Hear, hear.) No doubt, like other classes of the community, they expected to gain something by the great victory which they had contributed so much to achieve. But their expectations were not extravagant. Their main demand at that time was the abolition of church-rates. But, though Liberal Governments were in power by far the greater part of the time, they had to wait thirty-four years for that small medium of justice. The first offer which the Reform Ministry made in response to their demands was to transfer the burden of repairing churches to the land-tax, which, far from abolishing, would have rendered the imposition eternal. They did, indeed, afterwards make a fairer attempt for our relief by proposing that the charges provided for by church-rates should be paid out of church lands and pew-rents. But finding on a second division that the majority which supported the measure had diminished, they were so dismayed that they not only withdrew their proposal, but ever afterwards positively declined to "touch the burden with one of their fingers." Not only so, but they steadfastly resisted all attempts made by the Dissenters, or on their behalf, to get rid of the impost. When Mr. Whittle Harvey moved a resolution for abolition, the Whig leaders combined with the Tories to defeat him. When Mr. Duncombe, in 1839, moved for leave to bring in a bill for the relief of Dissenters, the Whigs opposed and defeated him. When Sir John Trelawney, in 1849, moved a resolution to the same effect, the Liberal Ministry led the opposition to him, and procured his defeat—(Hear, hear)—as well as that of an amendment proposed by Mr. Page Wood, the present Lord Chancellor, to exempt Dissenters alone from the payment of church-rates. (Hear.) The Dissenters, therefore, had to pass through many long years of further conflict and agitation; some taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, others submitting to imprisonment, others to the burden of prolonged and costly law-suits, and many to exciting local contests most abhorrent to their nature and habits, until, in the year 1868, the question was settled, not by a Liberal Government, but by Mr. Gladstone's personal exertions when out of office—all honour to him for the service. (Cheers.) Among the grievances of which Dissenters had long complained was the absence of any legal registration for births and of the right to celebrate marriages in their own places of worship. It is only justice to Sir Robert Peel to state that during his short occupancy of office in 1835, among the measures which he announced his intention of introducing was one for the relief of Dissenters in this respect, by providing for the civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths. And it was after this announcement that the Liberal Government which succeeded him brought forward bills for the same object, rather, however, on general grounds than immediately in the interest of Nonconformists. But in settling the details the wishes of the Nonconformists were fairly, if not fully, considered. But our Liberal friends did this then at so little sacrifice or risk to themselves that the bills passed both the Commons and the Lords without a division. Nevertheless, the acknowledgments of the Dissenters were then, and have been ever since, expressed with a constancy and fervour which proves that, far from being open to the charge of ingratitude, one of their foibles is a disposition to be exuberantly thankful for very small mercies. Whatever else the Dissenters have gained, they have gained pretty much for themselves. Mr. Hadfield's Qualification for Offices Bill, which he carried seven times through the House of Commons to be as often rejected by the Lords, owed its success at last to his own indomitable perseverance and pluck, far more than to the favour of any Government; and when at length it was passed, it was his and not a Government measure that was passed. So in regard to the various Burials Bills: they have always been in the hands of private members, though receiving a somewhat lukewarm support from Liberal Governments, that kind of support which shows very little anxiety for their success and very little regret for their defeat. The same thing may be said until quite lately of our successive efforts for the abolition of University Tests. In 1854 the admission of Dissenters to Oxford was secured by an amendment moved by Mr. Heywood—(cheers)—and carried against the opposition of the Liberal Government. In like manner the further measures brought in by Mr. Dodson, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Bouverie, and Sir John Coleridge, were treated by the Governments only as open questions until 1870, when the question was taken in hand by Mr. Gladstone—for which we thank

him with all our hearts—(cheers)—and in 1871 settled, after a fashion and for a time. (Renewed cheering.) I might refer to the various experiments in educational legislation made or countenanced by the leaders of the Liberal party, to Mr. Brougham's bill in 1820, to Sir James Graham's in 1843—(Hear, hear)—which, though it was introduced by a Conservative Government, received the full sanction and support of all the Liberal leaders—so that we had to fight and defeat that measure not only without their help, but in the teeth of their open and avowed hostility—(Hear, hear)—to the Minutes of Council of 1847; to Lord J. Russell's bill of 1853; to Mr. Forster's bill of 1870—to show how little the Liberal party understand the principles, acknowledge the rights, or consult the wishes of the Nonconformists. (Hear, hear.) But there is another side of the question. I have spoken of an alliance between the Nonconformists and the leaders of the Liberal party. I have endeavoured to show how our Parliamentary allies acted in reference to us. But an alliance of course implies reciprocal obligations. And how have the Nonconformists acted their part? Have we ever failed the Liberal party in any emergency whatever? (Cries of "Never.") In every conflict in which that party has been engaged has not our wing of the Liberal army been the first to advance and the last to retreat on the field of battle? (Cheers.) In hundreds of constituencies all over the country have not the Nonconformists borne the heat and burden of the day in the maintenance and the advancement of Liberal principles? If at this moment you were to ask the great majority of the Liberal members in the House of Commons who are the men in their respective constituencies who worked for them most devotedly in the past, and on whom they can count most confidently for the future, I am persuaded they would say the Nonconformists. And while thus helping forward the general cause of progress, have we been impatient, or unreasonably exacting, in pressing our own claims? So far otherwise, that it may be truly said of us that "sufferance is the badge of all our tribe." (Laughter and cheers.) Have we not again and again willingly held in abeyance objects that were dear to us rather than interfere with some great philanthropic or national agitation? Without, for the time, giving a thought to our own still unredressed wrongs, did we not, with all our heart and soul and strength, join Buxton and Sturge in demanding the emancipation of the slave, and Cobden and Bright in fighting the battle of free trade? (Cheers.) Again and again has Mr. Cobden remarked to me, "I am bound to say that in our long struggle for free trade we found your people everywhere our most earnest and trustworthy friends." (Cheers.) Yes, have we not often, when there was no great public question to the fore, and for the mere political convenience of the party, to avoid embarrassing the Minister, or to humour the mere caprice or ill-temper of those in power, consented to have our just rights sacrificed or indefinitely postponed? Have we in the various constituencies, even when we were largely in the majority, been in the habit of imperilling the success of the Liberal party by bringing forward men of our own; though we had men of our own—(Hear, hear)—whom we knew were admirably qualified to represent our principles and aims in Parliament? On the contrary, rather than divide the Liberal party, have we not often accepted most weak-kneed, rickety, feeble-minded brethren in the political faith—(laughter and cheers)—and, in strict obedience to the Apostolic injunction, received these persons weak in the faith, not even to doubtful disputations—(laughter and cheers)—but, on the contrary, have done all we could, by assiduous nursing and the gentlest shampooing, to strengthen the weak hands and to confirm the feeble knees! (Much laughter.) Nay, have we not sometimes had to stand as political sponsors for Whig catechumens who could scarcely be brought by any amount of schooling and prompting to utter with stammering lips the simplest and most elementary responses in their Liberal catechism? (Laughter.) But there is another aspect of the question on which I think it is time that we should venture to say a word. When an election takes place in this country, like the last for instance, intended to carry into power men holding Liberal principles and pledged to a Liberal policy, I think it will be admitted that no men work harder, no men sacrifice more cheerfully their time, their labour, their business pursuits for the time, and their money, than the Nonconformists. (Hear, hear.) And whenever there is political suffering for conscience sake, it generally falls upon them. After the last election there were, in Wales alone—(hear, hear), scores of men—honest, industrious, religious men—members and officers in Nonconformist churches, who were evicted from their holdings, turned houseless and homeless upon the world, on account of their courageous fidelity to their political convictions. (Cries of "Shame.") Every one of these sufferers, without an exception, was a Dissenter. And so it is generally that our allies lavish the labour and sacrifice upon us with a liberal hand. But when the time comes for the distribution of official rewards, what share of the spoil falls to our lot? It would be curious if a return could be obtained of the religious profession of office-holders in this country, to see to what an extent our excellent friends of the Church of England have contrived to occupy every "jutting, frieze, buttress, and cogen of vantage" in the great palace of patronage. And for us the rule seems to be as if on the door of every Government office, especially that of the Education Department, this label were affixed, "No Nonconformist need apply." (Laughter.) Happily the Dissenters of this country have never been place-hunters, or tuft-hunters—(Hear, hear)—never haunters of Ministerial ante-chambers; never of the class of political Micawbers, waiting on the official Providence for something to turn up. (Laughter.) But I am not at all sure that we have not carried our indifference on this point to a faulty excess—(Hear, hear)—and whether we should not for the future, not to gratify our ambition, but to protect our interests, claim a fairer share of official position and influence. (Hear, hear.) For we have begun to discover that we are grievously at a disadvantage, not merely as regards legislative action, but also as regards departmental administration. We find, in respect to matters in which we are vitally concerned, the whole power in the hands of men, as permanent officials, whose principles and sympathies are wholly adverse to us, and who use that power, often no doubt almost unconsciously, but sometimes also obviously and unscrupulously, to balk our wishes and to injure our interests. (Cheers.) There



is one further question arising out of the relations of the Nonconformists to the Liberal party on which probably I shall be expected to say a word. It cannot be denied that of late those relations have been somewhat rudely disturbed, and that a deep sense of wrong, a deep feeling of disappointment, not to say disaffection, pervades the whole Nonconformist camp. What, in these circumstances, is the course we ought to pursue? Well, it is not for one individual to prescribe, or even to suggest, a course for so numerous and powerful a body as are the Dissenters of England and Wales. I can only express, in the simplest and briefest form, my own views, and leave you to decide how far they reflect or interpret yours. It seems to me, then, that we ought to do nothing—and so strong is the confidence I have in the good sense, the moderation, the self-control of my brother Nonconformists, that I venture to say we shall do nothing—out of passion, resentment, or spite. (Hear, hear.) We will join no party to defeat or embarrass the Government, merely to wreak our wrath upon them for what we may think, and do think, to have been unfair and ungenerous treatment of ourselves. Our quarrel with those in power, so far as there is a quarrel, is one purely of principle. (Hear, hear.) We have no disappointed ambition to avenge, no hungering after the official loaves and fishes to gratify, that we should be tempted into any factious opposition to the Government. We have no inclination and no intention, if we can possibly avoid it, to withdraw our confidence and support from Mr. Gladstone. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Our feelings towards him have had, and still have, a deeper element in them than those of ordinary political allegiance. He is the Minister of our predilection. We are proud of what the greatest of his opponents has called "his transcendent abilities." We admire the gallant spirit in which he grappled with, and the consummate energy and eloquence with which he mastered and solved, those problems connected with the Government of Ireland, before which so many other statesmen had retired baffled and dismayed. (Hear, hear.) We honour and feel we can sympathise with his earnest, religious nature. We feel grateful to him for the honest pains we believe he has on more than one occasion taken to understand our views and consult our wishes. We have observed with deep interest the manner in which he has gradually shaken himself free from the Tory ceremonies which in early days had been wound around his spirit, and struggled into clearer and broader conceptions of truth and duty. We had hoped, and still hope, that it is reserved for him to achieve further triumphs in the cause of justice, and freedom, and Liberal progress. (Cheers.) But if it comes to a question between allegiance to a party and loyalty to principle we cannot hesitate. (Loud and continued cheering, many of the delegates rising and waving their hands.) I think I have shown that there are abundant proofs along the whole line of our history that we have not been unreasonable in our demands or importunate in our expectations; and we are still prepared to exercise forbearance towards our ancient Liberal allies, of whom we may say that—

In many an arduous and well-foughten field,  
We held together in our chivalry.

But we believe that there are certain great principles—principles which go down to the very foundation of all civil, religious, and intellectual freedom—for the maintenance and defence of which we are set, and for the maintenance and defence of which we mean to stand. (Cheers.) And we do this, not as Nonconformists, but as Englishmen—(Hear, hear)—believing as we do from the bottom of our hearts that the principles we advocate are those which will tend most hereafter, as it is acknowledged they have tended most heretofore, to establish the liberties of our country upon sure and firm foundations. We are willing to exercise patience, to make reasonable concessions; but to adopt a course which will involve the sacrifice, or the surrender, or the serious compromise of these vital principles, for the sake of any man or of any party, is what we cannot, what we ought not, what we must not, what we dare not, and, by God's help, what we will not, do.

Mr. Richard, who had spoken for nearly an hour, resumed his seat amid loud and enthusiastic cheering. The feelings of the meeting, which had been repeatedly manifested in ringing cheers, especially during the reading of the latter part of the paper, were now emphasised by the whole audience rising, cheering, and waving their hands for about two minutes consecutively.

#### POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF NONCONFORMISTS.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, of Birmingham, who followed with a paper on "The Political Organisation of Nonconformists," began by claiming the indulgence of the meeting, coming as he did with a paper on a similar subject after the eloquent address delivered by Mr. Richard, and went on to justify the reasonableness of Nonconformists, who had gained much, in asking for more. They were still entitled to demand that the State should no longer single out any faith for its especial care and patronage. After referring to the action of the Public Schools Commission in the case of Harrow, the Endowed Schools Commission, and the Education Act, which constituted the latest, if not the greatest, grievance under which Dissenters suffered, the paper went on to inquire how far these results were accidental, and how far they expressed a deliberate preference for the principle of ecclesiastical supremacy on the part of a Liberal Government, enjoying its position mainly owing to the exertions of the Nonconformists. Without imputing to the Endowed School Commissioners any conscious bias or intentional injustice, their proceedings emphatically point to the necessity of a better representation of Nonconformist interests and principles in legislation, in which these were deeply concerned. The evidence in the case of the Elementary Education Act was even more strongly in favour of the same conclusion, and irresistibly confirmed the growing distrust in the ecclesiastical policy of our Liberal statesmen.

In presence of the results accomplished in the Edu-

cation Department in their manipulation of Mr. Forster's Act, it would simply be suicidal for Nonconformists to stand idly by, while all that they hold dear in educational policy is sacrificed and overthrown. The number of new Church schools built in two years before the passing of the Act was less than 200 per annum. In the six months' grace allowed by Mr. Forster, grants were asked for 2,852 Church schools, and these applications have been met in the most generous and lavish spirit. Districts, largely inhabited by Nonconformists, have been magnificently assisted by State funds to provide themselves with a monopoly of Church school accommodation—(Hear, hear)—and the schools so established will be so munificently endowed with annual subsidies that, with the most ordinary economy, they will be maintained without any contributions from the denomination in whose interests they have been erected. I could quote case after case of private schools whose accounts show a large profit, and whose working is entirely independent of private subscriptions. And thus, in every borough, in every parish in this kingdom, under the fostering care of a Liberal Government, there are rising up institutions, erected in part by national grants, supported by national funds, collected both from the taxes and the rates levied on the whole community—institutions which Parliamentary irony facetiously describes as National Schools, but which are, to all intents and purposes, bulwarks of the Anglican Church, the centres and strength of her political power, committee-rooms at elections, and the main lever for that Conservative reaction, so long predicted, and now hastened and encouraged by this disastrous bill. (Cheers.) Is it wonderful that the Nonconformists have revolted? Was it statesmanlike to expect their passive acquiescence in a policy which reverses and stultifies the work they have magnified for so many generations?

The speaker submitted that, as an act of pure justice, and in the name of religious equality, they were warranted in claiming: first, the absolute control by the representatives of the ratepayers of all national funds applied to purposes of secular education, and the withdrawal of all grants made to the denominations for this purpose. (Hear, hear.)

This involves the relegation to religious bodies of the religious teaching of the children at school, for which purpose each sect will have its own buildings, at times set apart for the purpose, while the board schools may be similarly employed, provided no privilege be given to one denomination over another. This is the only possible solution at present of the religious difficulty. Thanks to Mr. Forster, there are now thousands of parishes, amply provided with school accommodation, entirely in the hands of the most powerful and richly endowed of the sects. In these districts national education is impossible, unless the State, through its representatives, elected by the ratepayers, assumes entire control of the schools during the time devoted to secular teaching. To claim this is only to insist on the practical operation of the principle laid down in Mr. Gladstone's Greenwich speech, and to demand "the severance between the application of State funds and controverted matters of religion." Secondly, and of the same character, is our requirement with respect to Normal Schools. Of thirty-four of these training colleges, twenty-nine are conducted by the Church of England and the Roman Catholics, and only three are professedly unsectarian, and managed by the British and Foreign School Society. These sectarian schools are mainly supported by public money, and the enormous grants which they receive from the common purse are thus devoted to support institutions whose chief effort is directed to the preparation of sectarian teachers, unfitted on that very account to promote a national unsectarian system. Thirdly, the question of university reform is still unsettled. We shall be told that the Act passed last session was a compromise which we have no right to disturb; but the sooner we let it be clearly understood that Nonconformists will accept no compromises of their cherished principles, and receive no instalments as complete satisfaction of their undoubted rights, the better it will be for us, and for the Government which requires our support. (Applause.)

Lastly, we claim, as we think not prematurely, but in the ripeness of time, the crowning of the edifice—the removal of that injustice which has created and fomented all the rest—the abolition of those ecclesiastical privileges which have divided the nation into two camps on almost every political and social question, and which have hindered its development and stunted and repressed its free religious and intellectual life. It is full time that we struck at the root of the tree which has borne evil fruit too long—(cheers)—and which has produced the intolerance of thought and action which has so often hindered practical legislation, and blocked the way to social and religious progress. The disestablishment of the Irish Church is an absurd anomaly, unless it is followed by the disestablishment of the Church of England and Wales. (Renewed cheers.) A wrong and injustice done by a minority to a majority of the people does not become just and right when practised by a majority on a minority. The injury is as great in principle even if it can be shown to be less in degree. The pay and patronage of the State blesses neither the giver nor the receiver of the bribe. A Church divided against itself, and united only in the determination to maintain its vested interests, and in opposition to those who should be hailed as fellow-workers in a common cause—a Church clinging tenaciously to the connection which saps its independence and confines its usefulness—these are the consequences of a system which has outlived its reason for existence, and which is defended by those who have long since ceased to believe in the theories which have led to its creation. (Cheers.)

What they wanted was religious equality—social, political, and economical. They demanded these reforms because the nation directly suffered from the adherence in practice to doctrines which it had now condemned in theory. In the one case the choice of the people had been limited; in the other, talents which should have belonged to the nation had remained uncultivated; and in both instances alike the loss of individuals had turned to the detriment of the public service. The next consideration was the kind of action by which they could best and most properly secure these objects. Arrayed against them was the most complete organisation; the most intense feeling. It

was no question of blowing trumpets, but if these questions were matters of conscience and involved great principles, they were justified, and more than justified, they were required, to postpone every other object to this end—to assault the fortress from all sides, to attack the outworks and to besiege the citadel—to make no peace and hear of no compromise till religious equality was an accomplished fact, and toleration an antiquated history. (Applause.) And he thought the power of Nonconformists was not unequal to the strain cast upon it:

If the state of affairs has not changed since the last religious census, there must be many seats in Parliament which might be carried for a Nonconformist candidate. At present the number of such candidates is disproportionately small, and in all ecclesiastical questions the decision of the House of Commons affords no test of the opinions of the population. (Applause.) But even where Nonconformist candidates are impossible, the Dissenters have it in their power in numbers of cases to secure that no Liberal shall be elected who will not accept to the fullest extent the political consequences of the doctrine of religious equality—(continued applause)—which all Liberals are ready to subscribe, but which so few Liberals are willing to carry into operation. It seems to me that two questions—the amendment of the Education Act and the disestablishment of the English Church—should be made test questions by Nonconformists in every borough and county election, and that on the acceptance of our programme in respect to these matters our future support should strictly depend. It is not necessary that we should vote for Tories; simple abstention will suffice for the defeat of Liberals who are false to what should be made a cardinal point in the Liberal platform. Of 110 Liberal members for boroughs returned, after a contest, to the present Parliament, sixty per cent. were returned by majorities of less than one-tenth of the electors, and 90 per cent. were returned by majorities of less than one-fifth. It is certain that in most, if not all, these cases the refusal of the Nonconformist support would change the character of the return. (Hear, hear.) It is said that the result would be the advent of the Conservatives to power. I reply that open enemies are better than traitorous friends—(loud cheers)—and it is far preferable that we should owe our wrongs to those who are in principle conscientiously opposed to us, than that the same wrongs should be inflicted on us by those whom we have spent labour and time and money to support, and who, calling themselves our representatives, yet suffer themselves to be tools for promoting the policy we abhor. And, besides, Liberals in opposition will have time to ponder on the claims of those "humble friends" whom they never recognise from the elevation of the Treasury Bench. (Laughter.) The temporary withdrawal of our support will be a marvellous stimulant to Liberal statesmen—(Hear, hear)—and Conservatives in office will give Liberal members the leisure to study the Liberal creed and an insight into the principles which they now underrate or ignore. It is alleged, however, that necessary reforms will be arrested, and important measures delayed, if we break up the Liberal party. What are those necessary reforms? (Hear, hear.) We know—none better than the Nonconformists, who have ever tilled for the social elevation of the masses, with whom they are in close contact and sympathy—how many and how much needed are the measures of social legislation; but it is yet to be proved that those measures are dependent on the union of the so-called Liberal party. That party, as it appears in the House of Commons, has not lately shown the seal, or the ability, or the discretion in dealing with these questions that should induce us to postpone in their behalf the claims already so often and so long delayed. And as regards political reforms, the ballot, army purchase, and the position of the House of Lords are matters which may as well wait the settlement of our claims as take precedence of them in time or importance. (Applause.) Besides, we have no option. Our representative in the House of Commons, Mr. Miall—(loud cheers)—has been challenged by the leader of the Government to take his support elsewhere if he cannot conscientiously give it to the Ministry. Through him we have been defied by a Government, arrogant in its strength, and scornful of its power, and confident in the disunion of Nonconformists. This disunion, or want of union, must be repaired by prompt and effectual organisation. (Hear, hear.) An appeal should go out from this meeting to all classes and sections of Dissenters throughout the country, urging them to form committees in every borough and in every important town. (Applause.) The circular should contain a clear statement of the Nonconformist claims. The discontent which prevails has been fanned into open revolt by a special wrong, which, irritating as it is, is yet insignificant in comparison with the principles which lie behind. It is, above all things, important that, having been forced into opposition, we should not return to our allegiance until not only the small grievance is removed, but the great principle fully admitted. The withdrawal of the 25th Clause will undo one effect of a false policy. Let us, however, recognise that our dissatisfaction is with the policy itself, much more than with any of its particular results. (Applause.) These are mere indications of the mischievous doctrine from which they spring, and their removal will only make way for some fresh offence, so long as the doctrines themselves are maintained and defended. Armed with such a manifesto, the local committees should in every case and immediately seek a conference with their members and lay their demands before them. This is the time for plain speaking. A general election may come this year, and is almost certain in the next eighteen months, and at that election the Nonconformists must be prepared to show that they are no longer to be trifled with—that there is a limit to the patience of the most devoted followers and most humble friends, and that they who have ever been the most earnest and unselfish workers in the Liberal cause will now require from those whom they have helped to power a full recognition of all their rights, and a complete assertion of Liberal principles. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. J. J. STITT, of Liverpool, moved the following resolution:—

That, after grave deliberation, this conference is com-



pelled to conclude that the educational policy unfortunately adopted by Her Majesty's Government is hostile to the interests of religious liberty, since—1. Under the Elementary Education Act sums of money may be paid from the rates for the support of sectarian schools. 2. By the grants in aid of denominational schools, which have been largely and unnecessarily increased, in addition to the payments made from the rates, sectarian organisations for education may be entirely sustained without private subscriptions, and, as the result, the education of the people is to a large and increasing extent given into the charge of the clergy of the Church of England and the priests of the Church of Rome. Every effort having been made to induce the Government to reconsider a policy which reverses the whole course of modern legislation, this conference, believing that the cause of religious freedom is of more importance than any ties of party, appeals to the Nonconformists of Great Britain to declare that they will not accept as a satisfactory representative any candidate for a seat in the House of Commons who will not pledge himself to the amendment of the Education Act, in the sense and to the extent of the propositions adopted by the conference.

In supporting the motion he said:—

I am very conscious of the responsibility attaching in present circumstances to any recommendations given to the Nonconformists of the country which may result in a change in their relations to the Liberal party. Such a change, though it may be perfectly justifiable in present or threatened circumstances, should not be lightly or hastily effected, and only as a last resort, as its ultimate consequences and issues it is impossible to foresee. It would be vain to deny that our present relation to the Liberal party is one of growing tension threatening an early rupture. Nor is the cause of this far to seek. Not only our feelings, but our deepest conscientious convictions, have been repeatedly and ruthlessly violated "in the house of our professed allies and friends," and that not on points of minor importance, but precisely on such as our whole past history proves we attach the highest importance to, and for which we have made the largest sacrifices. It is not we, but they who have changed, halted, and gone back. Remembering the issue of religious equality prominently raised at the last general election, and the not insignificant part we played in swelling the Liberal majority, and placing the present Ministry in power, we simply ask and insist, as we conceive we have a right to do, that the views and wishes of the great majority of that party should regulate the ecclesiastical, and especially the educational, policy of the Government, and not that vital measures should be forced through Parliament by a professedly Liberal administration, against the loudest protests of its own supporters, and by the votes of its bitterest opponents, the Tories. Need I remind you of the extent to which this irritating and retrograde policy was persistently carried out in the conception of and passage through Parliament of the Elementary Education Act? On this subject it has become convenient in some quarters to stigmatise our conduct as obstructive, unreasonable, and vacillating. We are accused of trying now to evade a compromise to which it is alleged we were parties. This we deny, and challenge the proof. Though the denominational schools system, after thirty years' trial, and the expenditure of some twelve millions of public money, had confessedly failed to reach the very class of children for whom it was specially intended, on the introduction of the Education Bill into Parliament, we felt and acknowledged that it was impossible for any Ministry, which essayed to introduce a really national system of education, to ignore or attempt the destruction of the existing network of institutions spread all over the country, and which the State had been largely instrumental in founding and fostering. In strict harmony with this was the motion introduced by Mr. Richard, the first words of which were, "Without desiring to interfere with the continued receipt of grants by the existing schools," &c., &c. In Liverpool the Nonconformists passed similar resolutions. Thus we deprecated any hasty and violent withdrawal of the State funds on which these existing schools had so long been taught to lean, and we were quite prepared to see them working side by side with the new board schools, which we fondly hoped to see soon springing up all over the country; satisfied that in process of time the two would become assimilated in one common national system, and the denominational element be gradually eliminated. But our disappointment, and, I will add, indignation, was great when we found that our confiding generosity was requited by betrayal. First, the time was extended for application for building grants for new denominational schools, by which their number has been immensely increased, over 3,000 applications being presented in six months. Secondly, the capitation grant to these schools was increased to 50 per cent., ostensibly to enable them to compete with the contemplated board schools. Thirdly, the Act was so ingeniously framed that the first, and up to the present time, almost its sole effect has been to sweep the children into the denominational schools, and to appropriate the ratepayers' money in paying the fees, for those whose parents were considered too poor to pay. The disappointment of the Nonconformists with the texture and passage of the Act has been tenfold intensified by the manner in which it has been worked by boards entirely in the interests of denominationalism, and especially by the gross partiality of the Education Department in its administration. Witness the treatment of the South Shields, Plymouth, and Wednesbury, and other boards, who chose to exercise the permission clearly given in the Act, and refused to frame a bye-law for the payment of fees to denominational schools. Such conduct on the part of the department has well-nigh driven Nonconformists into open revolt, and there are already not unnatural suggestions made that it justifies their immediate and entire secession from the so-called Liberal party—which must not be confounded with secession from the Liberal cause. Now, I am bold to say that I cannot contemplate such a result without feelings of pain, which it is very difficult to convey to another. I am not unmindful, nor would I have been unmindful, of the debt we owe to Mr. Gladstone as the great statesman to whom was due the final abolition of the hated church-rates; to Mr. Gladstone, as the steady friend of University reform; and above all, to Mr. Gladstone as the champion of that ever memorable measure which disestablished and disendowed the Irish Church. Such deeds as these have enshrined his name in the hearts of Nonconformists, who regarded him with feelings of real affection and almost reverence. True, it seems almost incredible that one who had gone so far, and trod so firmly the path of religious equality by "levelling down," should in an evil moment have been beguiled into sanctioning so wretched and flagrantly retrograde

a measure as that which is now agitating the country to its centre, rekindling all the sectarian animosities which it was hoped were dying out, and which now threaten effectually to impede the progress of the education which was regarded as the imperious necessity of our times. Well, gentlemen, all this is very trying, but still, I would fain feel, that spite of what has so far occurred, my confidence in Mr. Gladstone is not yet gone. Of his extreme conscientiousness and honesty of purpose I have never had a doubt; and, notwithstanding all present appearances to the contrary, I would fain hope that even yet we shall not look in vain to him for a fair solution of the present educational difficulty—a repeal of the obnoxious 25th section, and a modification of the Treasury grants to the denominational schools. Were this the only question at issue—I mean the English Education Act—I should think a loud reiteration of our objections and a firm remonstrance would suffice for their removal; but unhappily the false step already taken in framing the English Education Act, in defiance of the principle of religious equality, has afforded the coveted opportunity to the Romish hierarchy in Ireland to make a demand which, for its startling audacity, has perhaps not been equalled in the present generation—the demand that the education of Irish youth shall be handed over to the Irish priesthood, the funds being provided by the British taxpayer! Such a demand might well cause the ears of Protestant England, Scotland, and Wales—and last, though not least, those who in Ireland itself have so recently had to submit to the disendowment of their Church—to tingle. The moment it becomes apparent that there is an intention to yield to the demands of the Irish priesthood, that moment the whole support of the Nonconformists will be forfeited, be the consequences to party what they may. Such is the firm attitude which I conceive it is our duty to assume—remonstrance regarding the present, and prompt secession should the dread contingency to which I have alluded arise. If this is the result of our conference and this resolution, we shall not, in my opinion, have met in vain.

Mr. R. W. DALE seconded the resolution, claiming his privilege, as he understood an amendment was to be proposed, of reserving his speech till a later stage in the discussion.

The Rev. J. G. ROGERS, of London, said the resolution was not strong enough, and he proposed as an amendment the words, "Will not vote for any candidate who does not pledge himself to these principles," in lieu of "will not accept as a satisfactory representative." He wished the Liberal leaders to understand that Nonconformists were now determined that their leaders must now accept their position as the only position consistent with true Liberalism. (Hear, hear.) Let them observe what they were asking for. They were not asking them to pledge themselves to the disestablishment of the English Church. If they did that the course would be extreme, but they simply asked them to say, that as they were dependent upon Nonconformist support, they should be prepared in the House of Commons to give their votes against doing Nonconformists injustice; they asked for nothing more. (Hear, hear.) They were not in the position they formerly occupied. The great questions in which they were at one time interested had now been settled. There was no question now about the repeal of the corn laws; no question about the extension of the suffrage; the ballot would shortly be given; and he wished to know what single article now remained upon the Liberal programme for the sake of which they should subordinate their Nonconformist principles? (Cheers, and "None.") He thought that it was necessary, too, that they should take decided action if they were not to lose every vote in the present Parliament. (Hear, hear.) What was the game being played at present? In the West Riding of Yorkshire an honourable and distinguished member of the Liberal party (Mr. Holden) had come forward to contest the constituency on their side. But what happened? Mr. Edward Akroyd, the Liberal member for Halifax, and a representative man of his party, went and placed his name on the committee of the Conservative candidate. ("Shame" and hisses.) What happened at Plymouth, too, the other day? Mr. Rooker was one of the most loyal and independent supporters of the party in that town, who had largely engaged in fighting every battle for the Liberal candidates, who had great powers, and who had led Dissenters again and again to vote on behalf of Church candidates; but now, forsooth, because he was a Dissenter and took Nonconformist views, numbers of the Churchmen who had been indebted to him in years past had left him, and the Conservative candidate was returned. (Shame.) Such was the kind of game that would be played through all the Liberal constituencies of the kingdom, unless they made their position clear. (Hear, hear.) Only let them make their position clear—and they had strength enough to make it understood—(cheers)—and they would be respected; but if there was any possibility that they could be cajoled and led to forget their distinct utterances at the conference, then the one and only result would be defeat, disaster, confusion, and a split in the Liberal party. (Loud cheering.) They were doing their best for the Liberal party by taking their ground firmly, and saying that, so long as it adhered to their principles, they would stand by it. (Cheers.) He believed that Mr. Gladstone required to be taught one great lesson, and he wished that Nonconformists would teach it to him—i.e., that if he meant to conciliate the Nonconformists of Eng-

land, he must ask the Right Hon. W. E. Forster to accept some other seat than that which he now occupied. (Laughter and cheering, during which nearly all present stood up, and repeatedly cheered.) If Mr. Gladstone was to have strength given to him, it must be by determination on the part of Nonconformists. There were plenty of Akroyds—(laughter and cheers)—plenty of trimming Liberals (laughter and "Hear, hear")—plenty whose hearts were in the "Cave," although they might be on benches of the Liberal party. (Laughter, and renewed cheering.) Let them say that day that they had a position and meant to occupy it. (Cheers.) If it should be that war broke out, and they wanted to go in on the side of peace, there was no irrevocable pledge in the amendment to prevent them doing so. (Hear.) What they meant to do was, that they would call upon all Nonconformists, in the present state of things, not to vote for any man who would not take part in undoing this grievous wrong which had been done by the Liberal Ministry to their most faithful and devoted friends. (Renewed cheering.)

The Rev. W. BINNS, of Birkenhead, seconded the amendment, which, though it did not go as far as he should be inclined to go—(laughter)—was still an improvement upon the resolution. (Hear, hear.) Whatever power they possessed, let them make that power distinctly felt in the country. (Hear.) Whatever their opinions might be, let them speak such opinions out in such a clear and forcible way that there was no possibility of misunderstanding them. (Cheers.) He maintained that the soundest policy to insist upon was to bring out candidates who would themselves say what the truth was, and who would vote for the truth. If only twenty voters in a borough, or two hundred voters in a county, recorded their votes for such a candidate, they showed that it was better to stand upon principle and be defeated—(Hear, hear)—than to effect any compromise whatsoever. He believed if Mr. Gladstone were asked to co-operate with them earnestly he would; but if he would not, why, then, Russell father and son were as good as Gladstone father and son—(laughter)—and it seemed to him that they were more really at one with those who stood up for religious equality. But if neither of these companions would adopt their cause, who could tell to what extent Mr. Disraeli might not be able to educate his party. (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr. HENRY VINCENT, who was received with loud cheers, said he rose to address the conference under great embarrassment, because he was anxious above all things that the conference should be thoroughly united in its principle and policy. (Hear, hear.) All the traditions of his life made him in favour of the emphatic terms of the amendment which had just been proposed. (Hear, hear.) He believed at the same time that, properly understood, the original motion meant the same thing. ("Hear, hear," and some cries of "No.") At the same time he was quite prepared to support one or the other, or both together, for the sake of unanimity. (Laughter.) He would not enter upon the grave questions which had been debated. They had arrived at the crisis of their fate, and the question was, are the Nonconformists prepared to make their power felt in a constitutional way at the approaching election? (Cries of "Hear, hear," and "Yes.") That meeting brought to his recollection the year 1847, when the Liberal party was prepared to endow the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, and was almost prepared to make that measure a Cabinet measure. The Nonconformists then held a meeting in a hall in London, in the neighbourhood of Bishopsgate-street, when they did not possess a tithe of the power which they now possessed. He was then contesting the borough of Ipswich on the very principles of this conference, and it was resolved at that meeting in Crosby Hall that Nonconformists would not vote for any candidate unless he pledged himself to oppose the principle of the extension of endowments in this country; and he ventured to say that they had defeated that policy. (Hear, hear.) They must not forget to-day that what they stood in the presence of was no mere question of an educational character; they were in the presence of a political and ecclesiastical conspiracy against the liberty of the English people. (Loud cheers.) He did not charge Mr. Gladstone with being the leader of that conspiracy, but "there was a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself." (Hear, hear.) Every Administration in this nation was partly guided by the advice of unseen men who were behind the scene, and who gave weighty influence to the existing Cabinet. He made bold to say that there were men in this country who feared the power of the Nonconformists; who feared any union that might yet be created between the Nonconformists and the independent working men who possessed votes in this nation. (Cheers.) These men were anxious, by subtle and under-handed schemes, to stab this nation with what was called schools, in which the priestly influence would be predominant, and in which they would work for that Tory power and policy which would have destroyed England long ago but for the independent and heroic action of the leaders of Nonconformity, who, from the days of Oliver Cromwell—(cheers)—until now, had been the upholders of all that promoted the glory and freedom of this nation. He said, then, that they would act wisely to declare that they would not accept any candidate who was not prepared to undo the work of the Education Act, and who was not prepared in all future legislation to recognise, not the Nonconformists' policy, but a Christian and a just policy—a policy of absolute

\* We should perhaps say that only a portion of the above address was actually delivered, Mr. Stitt being obliged suddenly to stop by the chairman's ten minutes bell. The greater part of the speech as it would have been delivered we give as it has appeared in a Liverpool paper.

DEFECTIVE  
ORIGINAL



equality before the law for all ranks and orders of the people in this country. (Cheers.) And if it should be the judgment of the conference—if they could have a united vote—if they could say in addition that they would not only not accept—but would not vote for a man unless he came up to that standard—so much the better. Above all, he desired to remind them (and he said it also to himself, for he was an hereditary as well as a born Nonconformist, as descended from the man who preached God's just judgment against a guilty city, in the infamous reign of Charles II., and he was not prepared today in the memory of the sufferings of his forefathers to surrender a particle of those great principles which underlay liberty, and without which the very word liberty was a mockery and a snare—(cheers)—he said to them and to himself that he had something other to do than to cheer or to pass either the original resolution or the amendment, or both. On their return to their respective homes, they were bound to go there with tongues of fire. If they were to carry out their principles loyally towards God and the world, they must not sit down in quietude when they reached their homes. (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. R. ABERCROMBIE, of Cardiff, said a reference had been made at a previous meeting to Methodists, but he could state that it was only one party—the old Methodists—who stood aloof from this movement. All other parties of Methodists were heartily with them, and he did not doubt that in the end, in consequence of the Irish aspect of the question, the old Methodists would be on their side too. (Applause.)

Mr. THOS. SNAPE, of Liverpool, objected to the amendment. The supporters of many movements which appealed chiefly to Nonconformists for their support had already adopted that principle, and if the different sections of the Liberal party went on with it a little while longer they would find themselves so pledged that it would be impossible to find any member of Parliament for whom they could vote. They were simply attaching fetters to themselves, which they would find very difficult to remove. ("Hear, hear," and "No, no.") The amendment only gave a pledge subject to the judgment and decision of those who made it as to the question upon which the general election might turn, and if such a question should be of imperial interest in their estimation the pledge would simply be valueless. It was by no means so certain that such a question might not arise, and that within a comparatively short time, which might necessitate an appeal to the country. It was possible that under such circumstances many who sympathised heartily and thoroughly with the principles of the resolution would find themselves unable to adhere to such a pledge as Mr. Rogers wished them to give. The resolution, he thought, pledged them quite as far as they were able to go. (Cries of "No, no.")

Mr. R. W. DALE, who was loudly cheered, said he first desired to express, in the clearest and most emphatic way, that if he had not thought that the original resolution meant every syllable that Mr. Rogers meant by his amendment, he should never have consented to second it. (Hear, hear.) They were both agreed that there were certain great national exigencies conceivable under the strain and pressure of which it would be their duty, as it was the policy of their fathers, to postpone the pressure of their own principles upon the actual administration of the country. If a general election were to take place under such circumstances that the return of the Conservatives to power would plunge this country into a great and unjust war, and the return of the Liberals would mean the preservation of an honourable peace, there was not a member of the conference but would be prepared to say, "We will take the very worst Liberal we can find rather than vote for a Tory under such circumstances." (Cheers.) That was what was meant by the original resolution. (Hear, hear.) He thought, however, that after the expression of thought and feeling in the conference that morning it might perhaps be necessary to express that meaning a little more clearly, and he had the pleasure of announcing that Mr. Rogers withdrew his amendment—(Hear, hear)—in favour of the following rider which would be added to the resolution:—

And further to make it clearly understood that, except under the pressure of great national exigencies, we cannot give such a candidate our support.

(Loud cheers.) There were loud cries that the proposed rider to the resolution should be again read, and when Mr. Dale, complying with this request, reached the word "cannot," there were general cries of "Will not."

Mr. DALE said, "Will not"; yes, that is what we mean—(laughter and cheers)—and we will adopt it. He wished further to say that there had been no real difference of opinion in the conference committee as to the policy which the conference should recommend the Nonconformists of this country to pursue; no grave and serious difference, such as to impair to any extent the unanimity with which these resolutions were submitted to the conference. Practically they all meant the same thing, but then they all had their different ways of saying the same thing, and it was wonderful what a great affection and admiration a conference of Nonconformists always seemed to manifest for the most vigorous language in which a resolution could be framed. (Cheers.) The principle affirmed in the resolution was that the cause of religious freedom was of more importance than any ties of party.

(Hear, hear.) That would be true if the Liberal party at the present moment were what it always had been, but there were special circumstances in the position of the Liberal party just now which gave a statement of the principle special emphasis and force. They had heard a great deal during the last few days about the hesitation and uncertainty which had characterised the movements of Nonconformists two years ago. What were they to say about the policy of the Liberal party itself at the present moment? They found men professing themselves to be Liberals, in the Northern Division of the West Riding of Yorkshire, pledging themselves to support a Conservative candidate. He thought it was time they made it clearly understood that unless the Liberal party were to recognise the obligation of party ties, and to support a candidate who came out under their colours, they, the Nonconformists, could not be expected to respect party ties, and support a candidate who came out under other colours. Let them remember when they spoke of the leaders of the Liberal party, that the great chief of the advanced Liberals had been out of the conflict for the last two years, and before they were charged with deserting their leaders, let them hear what he had to say on the question. (Cheers.) He trusted that very soon after the meeting of Parliament Mr. Bright—(loud cheers)—would be in his place again, and before any charge was flung at them of deserting their old leaders, let them see whether their old leader, who led them to the feet of Mr. Gladstone, would not be prepared, under present circumstances, if the Government showed no signs of penitence, to lead them into open revolt against him. (Renewed cheers.) Why was it necessary to talk of the possibility of dissolving the ties of party? It was because they had already done everything that they had been able to do in order to induce their leaders to accept a wiser and a more just and generous policy. (Hear, hear.) They had sent memorials to the Prime Minister, and they had sent petitions to the House of Commons; resolutions had been passed by the great representative bodies of Nonconformists—bodies representing, in some cases, powerful Nonconformist communities scattered over the whole kingdom, and in other cases Nonconformist counties and districts of England. These resolutions had been expressed in the most emphatic form, but they had been practically disregarded. (Hear, hear.) They had secured division after division in the House of Commons, in order to test the opinion of the members of that House, and again and again they had been beaten. They had sent deputation after deputation to Mr. Gladstone himself, to Lord Ripon, and to the Vice-President of the Council, and from none of them had they received any such assurance as justified them in supposing that if they failed to recognise their strength and use it, the concessions they desired would be granted to them. It was time now that they should rely altogether upon themselves; and what he asked the members of the conference to do was this, that when they returned to the localities which had sent them to Manchester, if they had an organisation already existing which comprised the Nonconformists of the constituency to which they belonged, let them remain faithful to that organisation, and sustain it in the utmost possible degree. (Hear, hear.) If they had an organisation already in existence which did not cover the whole ground, or which was not at present very effective, let them try if they could make it as effective as possible, instead of starting a new one. If they had no organisation at all existing in their constituencies, let them start one before another week was over, and let it be an organisation which should include within its limits the great mass of the Nonconformists of the constituency. It must not be supposed for a moment that by asking for political organisations of Nonconformists they intended, even by implication, to suggest any thought of rivalry with the great society represented on the platform by Mr. Edward Miall. (Cheers.) He believed there was no society in England that had been so ably served, that had presented a more honourable policy, that had more steadily and faithfully striven to secure the great aims for which it was established, than the Liberation Society. (Cheers.) But it did sometimes happen that they could not get a strong Liberation committee in a constituency. If they could not, then let them get up an association and call it a Nonconformist Association. A rose by any other name would smell as sweet—(laughter and cheers)—and what they wanted was to get the constituencies organised somehow and at once, and organised for the express purpose of securing the return of members of Parliament who would vote, and vote at once, for the reversal of the Government policy on the Education Act, and for embodying in legislation the results adopted at this conference. People were always asking them to give this Act a fair trial. The men who asked them to do that did not really mean what they said. They knew that the Act was a bad thing. They knew that the longer it lasted the worse it would appear to be, but they shrank from politic causes from endeavouring to pursue a just and right policy. They thought that the expense involved in altering the objectionable provisions of this Act and adopting a wiser and juster policy was too great for the Liberal party to bear at present. Let them talk to the friends of the Government on this matter, and they found that they had hardly a good word to say for any of the provisions of the Act to which Nonconformists objected. The Act reminded him of a man of

whom he had heard who was so wretched an object that it was said that he walked about the world only to save his funeral expenses. (Laughter.) Now, he thought they must make the Liberal party understand that it might be more expensive to keep the Education Act alive than to give it a prompt and decent interment. (Hear, hear.) The real question before the conference was, whether, on returning to their localities, they would take the means to secure that the political power of Nonconformists should be used for the great purposes for which, in God's good providence, that political power had been entrusted to them. Did they intend to work hard for the return of a candidate to Parliament simply because he had a large commercial experience, and called himself a Liberal—because he had a seat near their borough and patronised the Dissenting tradesmen—because he was a cousin of a Liberal lord and the brother of a Liberal baronet? Were these the purposes for which they were going to employ their great power, which had been won by them at a great price? (Cries of "No.") He knew their mind; and he was delighted to find that the resolution, to which some of them had looked forward with some misapprehension, was about to be carried—not merely unanimously, but enthusiastically—by this great conference. (Loud cheers, and some cries of "Vote.")

Mr. E. M. RICHARDS, M.P., stated that another amendment had been given in to the resolution, which the mover had consented to adopt—viz., the introduction of the words "to the extent of" in the last clause of the original resolution, which would now read as follows:—

The conference appeals to the Nonconformists of Great Britain to declare that they will not accept as a satisfactory representative any candidate for a seat in the House of Commons who will not pledge himself to the amendment of the Education Act in the sense and to the extent of the propositions adopted by this conference."

He had felt very much the effect of the few words which Mr. Dale had uttered in closing his address, and he did not hesitate at all to say that it would have been better they had never met at all than if they went away with any half-heartedness; better that Nonconformists had remained at home unless when they returned home they were prepared to carry out what they now threw up their hats and cheered for. Perhaps they would allow him to say, Welshman as he was—"Hear, hear," and cheers)—that if Englishmen would only do what Welshmen had done they would have carried into effect all that had been recommended by the present conference. Welshmen had given the keynote to what the constituencies ought to do. The working men of Merthyr Tydvil had said, in language which would not be mistaken, to their employers, "We respect and honour Mr. Crawshaw, but we want Henry Richard to represent us. Ninety per cent. of the constituencies were Nonconformists, and wanted to have a voice in the English Parliament, and that voice must be that of Henry Richard." (Hear, hear.) What the members of the conference had to put before their friends and neighbours was this: "We want religious equality in the English Parliament, and we must send there men who mean the same thing as we do." (Hear, hear.) He had himself the honour to represent a Nonconformist county in Wales, and he had been elected expressly on the principle of religious equality; and after the election, as his honourable friend Mr. Richard had told them, scores of men had been turned out of their holdings for their assistance in sending Mr. Gladstone and those who were with him into power. These men had been forsaken by those in whom they placed their trust. He was not unmindful of all that the Liberal party had to thank the present Government for. He felt the deep debt of gratitude for many acts that they had done, and not the least that the country had been preserved in peace. (Cheers.) But during the last two or three days he confessed that he had been confirmed in the opinion which had been growing upon his mind for some time, that, whatever the consequences might be, the Nonconformists were bound, as honest men with strong convictions, to say that the time had come when the ties of political party must give way to principles. It was in that spirit that he adopted the resolution as it had been amended. Last month, the Welshmen, anticipating the meeting of Englishmen, had a conference of their own at Aberystwith, and settled with a unanimous voice, that if this education question was to come to a satisfactory issue, they must stand upon nothing but a secular platform. (Cheers.)

Mr. GRIMWADE asked whether the resolution would bar them from voting for two Liberal candidates when one only represented their views.

Mr. DALE said that was a nice question of political casuistry, but he should say vote for both candidates in order to carry one.

The resolution, with the rider attached, was then carried amid loud cheering, which lasted some minutes.

As finally adopted, the resolution is as follows:—

That after grave deliberation this conference is compelled to conclude that the educational policy unfortunately adopted by Her Majesty's Government is hostile to the interests of religious liberty, since—

1. Under the Elementary Education Act sums of money may be paid from the rates for the support of sectarian schools.
2. By the grants in aid of denominational schools, which have been largely and unnecessarily increased, in addition to the payments made from the rates, sectarian organisations for education may be entirely sustained without private subscriptions, and, as the result, the education of the people is to a large and increasing extent given into the charge of the clergy of the Church of England and the priests of the Church of Rome.



Every effort having been made to induce the Government to reconsider a policy which reverses the whole course of modern legislation, this conference, believing that the cause of religious freedom is of more importance than any ties of party, appeals to the Nonconformists of Great Britain to declare that they will not accept as a satisfactory representative any candidate for a seat in the House of Commons who will not pledge himself to the amendment of the Education Act, in the sense and to the extent of the propositions adopted by this conference, and further to make it clearly understood, that except under the pressure of great national exigencies, they will not give any such candidate their support.

Mr. JAMES BOYD, treasurer of the Manchester committee, stated that 500*l.* had been subscribed in Manchester alone towards the expenses of the conference. In consequence of the postponement of the conference, however, the expenses had been nearly doubled. Several sums had since been received, making a total of 950*l.* The committee proposed to send a complete report of the entire proceeding, in pamphlet form, to each of the 1,900 delegates, which would cost a considerable sum in addition.

The Rev. CHARLES STOVEL afterwards addressed the meeting, and the conference adjourned.

#### THURSDAY EVENING MEETING.

The conference resumed its sittings at six o'clock in the Friends' Meeting House; Mr. Richard Johnson in the chair. The CHAIRMAN intimated that the Conference Committee had come to the conclusion to ask the meeting to pass the two resolutions relating to the law of marriages and the Burials Bill without discussion, in order that the very important questions of the Irish Education Bill and the Scotch Education Bill might be fully and largely discussed.

This proposal was accepted by the meeting; and the Rev. ALEXANDER THOMSON read the resolutions, which were as follow:—

That this conference is of opinion that when the time has come for a complete consolidation and amendment of the marriage laws of the United Kingdom, no amendment can be satisfactory to the Nonconformists which does not provide for the absolute equality of all citizens before the law. (Hear, hear.)

Further, that in reference to the burial service this conference claims equal rights for all citizens in the national or parochial Church and burial-grounds—(Hear, hear)—and while just regard is had to existing vested interests, this conference protests against any exclusive privileges being accorded to any section of the community in the interment of the dead.

Mr. BRITH seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

#### IRISH EDUCATION.

Mr. J. PAYNE JARVIS, of Limerick, moved—

That the members of this conference, while repudiating on the ground of religious principle on their own behalf all grants of public money to sustain denominational educational organisations, cannot recognise any claim of the Roman Catholic Church to obtain support from the State in propagating its religious faith in the schools of Ireland; and must insist that the duty of the State to confine itself entirely and solely to secular instruction should not be departed from in any part of this empire. (Cheers.)

The outcry which had been raised by the Roman Catholic hierarchy for distinctive religious teaching in place of the excellent system of national schools, arose from the conscientious Catholic belief that in every school for Catholics the surroundings should be distinctly religious; that teachers should be dressed in a sacred garb to diffuse their odour of peculiar sanctity; that images, pictures, and crucifixes should adorn the walls to lend their sacred influence to a secular instruction; that mental arithmetic should be succeeded by mental prayer; and that, as in the schools of the Christian Brothers, every time the hour struck all work should cease for five minutes, and in the solemn silence every scholar should repeat a "Hail Mary"; and, in short, that the great aim of elementary education should be, not to train the children to be useful citizens of the State, but to train them to be good and obedient children of the Church. If the proud and arrogant claims of the Roman Catholic hierarchy for religious education were consistent with truth, the question of national elementary education for Catholics in Ireland could be speedily settled. They could immediately destroy all the national schools; they could withdraw the Government grants; and the State, holding the Bible in its hands and pointing with its stern finger to the Divine commission (upon which the Catholics founded the claim), "Go and teach all nations," could say to these prelates, "Go, for both England and Christ expect you will do your duty, but you must do it at your own cost; you can have no subsidy from the public funds." (Cheers.) But that was where they would altogether fail to satisfy the Catholic "conscience." That "strangely convoluted conscience, with a peculiarly complicated action," held that its dictates should be honoured at the public charge. If education in Ireland were to be supported by school rates, he said advisedly, that the Protestants of Ireland, who were one-fifth of the community, would have to pay half the rates. But they did suppose that the Irish Catholics would impose school-rates at all upon themselves if they could possibly help it? At the Catholic education meeting held in Dublin last week, Mr. Heron, M.P. for Tipperary, was reported to have said, "The only fund which I see available for an endowment on a large scale is the surplus expected to arise from the sale of the property of the disestablished Church of Ireland—a surplus which, it is believed, will exceed 7,000,000*l.*" Mr. Heron had let the cat out of the bag. The Nonconformists of England who had helped to swell the majority of 100 by which the Irish Church had been disestablished, should have an eye to that surplus. (Cheers.) The disposal of that surplus depended on the vote of a future House of Commons. He asked them, would they consent to allocate any portion of that surplus for the

purpose of endowing a new system of exclusive Catholic education in Ireland? (Cries of "No, no.") This demand for distinctive religious education was not an Irish but an Italian idea. "Home rule" would be Rome rule. (Hear, hear.) The demand for State aid to Catholic Irish schools was a demand, not for equality, but for an acknowledgment of the Catholic supremacy. As for the politicians who would grant denominational education in England and deny it to the sister country, they might be left to the tender mercy of their opponents depending upon it that they would flay them. Ireland held out to them an alliance between home-rulers and denominational educationalists, and they threatened to disturb the peace of the country unless some concessions were made to them. Ireland could not be governed by expediency, but by recognised principles, applicable alike to England and Ireland. Nonconformists had promised to promote these principles, which affected not only Nonconformists, but all the citizens of this vast empire. Whatever Government was in power they would give them neither vote nor aid in any measure which infringed their ancestral and much cherished principle of civil and religious liberty. (Applause.)

The Rev. JOHN ORR (Comber, county Down, Ireland) seconded the resolution. He said that he appeared not as a Nonconformist, as, owing to Mr. Gladstone, Nonconformity no longer existed in Ireland. (Laughter and cheers.) He might say that his principal interest in the conference would be influential elsewhere, and, he believed, would go far to determine the course of legislation with regard to education in Ireland. He took it as an initial principle that if they were dissatisfied with denominational education here, they would refuse to extend it to Scotland and to Ireland. (Hear, hear.) And what did its extension to Ireland imply? Neither more nor less than handing over the education of the youth of Ireland to the Roman Catholic priesthood. (Hear.) He believed that the only logical and consistent principle was, that money contributed by the State should in no case be applied to the administration of a religious education to the people. (Hear, hear.) One great aim, the accomplishment of which was desired in Ireland, was that in the administration of any measure of education the children of that land should grow up together to cherish kindly and friendly feelings to one another, and that the national hatred and sectarianism, which had been the curse of Ireland, should cease to exist. (Hear.) He had sufficient faith and confidence in Mr. Gladstone to feel that he would never hand over the whole of the education of the children of Ireland into the hands of the Roman Catholic priests. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. J. C. STREET (Belfast), in supporting the resolution, said that Nonconformists had troubled themselves about the word "unsectarian" till it had become absolutely sickening. (Hear, hear.) Personally, he wished to express his thanks to the National Education League for its more recent programme. (Hear, hear.) Its first programme was not applicable to the whole empire, but its new programme would apply equally well to Ireland and England. If they carried out the programme of the conference and the Education League, they would dispose of the great Roman Catholic bugbear in Ireland, if not the greater bugbear of Anglicanism in England. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was carried with cheers.

#### THE SCOTCH EDUCATION BILL.

The Rev. HENRY RENTON (Kelso) read a paper on the Scotch Education Bill, of which the following is a summary. Mr. Renton began by giving a sketch of the scheme of education established by John Knox in 1560, the result of which was the establishment of a national school in every parish, which existed to this day. The parochial schools did great service for several generations; but their value and influence had long been very circumscribed; and the language in which a certain class of speakers and writers were given to indulge—that Scotland owed to them her religion, her intelligence, and her greatness—was the fancy picture of imagination and partisanship. For a long time past these schools had sufficed for only about a fourth part of the children attending elementary schools in the country districts, and only about a fifth part of those attending such schools in Scotland at large, without taking into account the thousands of children attending higher class schools. What was needed and demanded in Scotland was that for the present close system of management a popular constitution should be substituted, transferring all the powers now vested in the heritors to a local board, freely chosen by the ratepayers or householders. To this change three parties were opposed—the first, a large body of the heritors, because they were to be deprived for the most part of their exclusive powers; second, the Established clergy, because both their powers and their invidious position were to be swept away; and third, the parochial teachers, because they disliked and dreaded popular control. With security for the eligibility of only properly-qualified teachers, and for the efficient inspection of the schools, were required both greater stimulus to the diligence and fidelity of the teachers and greater facility for the removal of the inefficient and the delinquent. These important reforms for which the United Presbyterian Church had contended for twenty-five years, were provided under the bill which the Lord Advocate had announced his purpose to reintroduce in the ensuing session of Parliament—a bill in several respects the most advanced that had been brought forward by Government. It contained other provisions, against which, as well as against

these, clamour and opposition were raised by the opponents of reform and innovation; but of all, the grounds of controversy and of opposition raised to the bill the most important was its mode of dealing with the religious difficulty. That mode was unhappily the repetition of the vain attempt, where a principle of justice or religion was at stake, to evade a direct and honest issue, and to avoid the conflict and silence the controversy by a compromise with a semblance of concession to both sides. What public opinion had been lately evolved on the subject in speeches and resolutions had been mainly that of presbyteries and teachers, and judging from it, the current had set in strong for obtaining in the new bill some statutory provision for religious instruction. One presbytery on the 10th of this month passed resolutions, of which he gave the following abridgment:—

That religion shall be taught in all national schools; that, as the Shorter Catechism is one of the standards of the Reformed Church of Scotland, and contains doctrines held by the vast majority of the people of Scotland, its teaching shall be enacted, with the teaching of the Bible; and that the teaching of it cannot be regarded as intolerant when the rights of the minority are protected by a conscience clause; that, as the nation is avowedly Protestant in its constitution, it is absurd to say that if the nation maintains its teaching as interpreted by a Protestant Synod in Scotland, it is therefore under obligation to maintain the teaching of Popery under the control of the Popish priesthood in Ireland; that, to secure properly-qualified teachers they shall be trained to give religious as well as secular instruction.

This was, as the Americans said, "going the whole hog." The principle of a Church Establishment was carried out in education. Its doctrine was to be taught at the expense of the whole community, and dissentients, whether scores or millions, were to be granted the toleration of absenting themselves from its teaching. Religious test was to be re-imposed for the teachers, and they were to be an ecclesiastical and not a secular body. Other and numerous presbyteries, avoiding as impolitic and inexpedient such direct and bold expression, sought to accomplish the same ends as far as possible by less startling and more specious proposals. But if the press was to be taken as the exponent of public opinion, it would not be found greatly in favour of including devotional instruction in the branches to be provided in national schools, while its most powerful and widely-circulated organs strongly supported a strictly secular system. If the opinions of the religious denominations were taken, the Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians, and a variety of minor bodies among Protestant Dissenters, were opposed to the doctrines of the Shorter Catechism, while the United Presbyterians, who firmly held these doctrines, denied the right of Parliament to provide for the teaching of them. These were the circumstances in which the Lord Advocate, indicating clearly his own judgment that a national system should include only the secular branches, yet proposed to give school boards such powers that they might prescribe in the schools what religious instruction they saw fit. It demanded the vigilance of the guardians of religious liberty in England and Ireland, not less than those of Scotland, to take care that in no measure dealing with the education of the people should any principle or provision be sanctioned henceforth that would trench on the rights of conscience. It had been announced by the Lord Advocate and other members of the Government that, after the Ballot Bill, the Scotch Education Bill would be the second important measure brought forward in the approaching session; and he implored the conference to consider that on the principles and provisions of that measure would depend the character of the subsequent legislation for England and for Ireland; so that if the question of Scotch education was never of deeper interest and moment to the people of Scotland than at present, it was never before of so great interest and moment to the Nonconformists of England and the Protestants of Ireland. Then would take place the first great battle on the great principle which was henceforth to engage supreme attention in this country, and the precious opportunity would be furnished of preventing under the Scotch Act the evils which had been found so grievous under the English, and of securing under it, as far as education was concerned, that separation of religion from all State provision and control which Nonconformists desired as essential alike to the free, true, and earnest teaching of religion and to the investment of every subject of the State with complete religious liberty—an opportunity, he submitted, which they could not neglect without irreparable detriment to their own cause, and which they could not seize successfully or even resolutely without an earnest of its triumph. (Cheers.) He concluded by moving—

That the principle affirmed in the previous resolutions of the conference ought to guide the educational policy of the Government in all parts of the United Kingdom; and that determined opposition should be offered to the first educational measure by which they are again violated; that, when the Scotch Education Bill is brought before the House of Commons, the members of this conference will employ their earnest efforts to assist their friends in Scotland in securing that it shall contain no provision which will promote religious teaching at the public expense, or give support to denominational schools.

Mr. GEORGE HOPE, of Fenton Barns, East Lothian, in seconding the resolution, said he had been somewhat disappointed that in 1870 the English Education Act was allowed to be passed in comparative quiet; but it was apparent now that the English Nonconformists would speedily recover lost ground. They were all at one in desiring a compulsory common secular education taught in a religious spirit; and surely the common sense of the school boards would lead to the selection of such teachers as might be found in every denomination, who were capable of instilling into the young



principles of honesty, of purity, of goodness, and of loyalty to conscience—men imbued with a love of God—without trenching on the peculiarities of sect. (Hear, hear.) If the Scotch bill were first brought before Parliament, and the union of the Nonconformists of both countries could obtain the separation of secular from religious theological education, it would render the attainment of the proposed amendment to the English bill comparatively easy. There was not a single town in Scotland represented by a Tory—"Hear, hear," and cheers; and he believed the majority of the electors were Dissenters—(cheers); and if they would only make representations to their representatives on this question, whether the Scotch or the English bill came first, the programme of the conference would receive the votes of the Scotch members. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN intimated that if there was not a single Tory returned for any town in Scotland, there was no man in Scotland who had fought the fight of Liberalism and free-trade in Scotland as Mr. Hope had done. (Applause.)

The Rev. JOHN GORDON (Evesham) said he had received a few days ago a letter from a gentleman of great influence in Edinburgh, the Vice-President of the Philosophical Institution, in which he stated that it was understood in well-informed quarters in Edinburgh that Government were about to play this trick—viz., to bring forward the Scotch Education Bill, and in bringing it forward to declare that until some votes were taken upon it they would have nothing to do with the Nonconformist objections to the English Act, or the settlement of the education question in Ireland. They depended, as it was supposed, upon the religious feeling of the people of Scotland to get a favourable vote for that bill, and so obtain a leverage by which they might obtain a greater advantage than they could obtain if the other questions were first discussed. (Cheers.) The principle of the Scotch Education Bill, as proposed by the Lord Advocate, with which they had to do, was that, without prescribing religious teaching, it permitted the school board of every parish to adopt what religious teaching it pleased. The religious teaching in Scotch schools at present was not of an intense character at all. Whatever power the school managers or teachers possessed, that power was not administered; but if an active religious body in the different parishes of Scotland took into its hands the direction of religious instruction, the religious education given in the schools would be intensified. He urged upon the conference, and, through the conference, upon its friends in Parliament, that whatever measure involving the principle of religious teaching, in connection with national education, should be first proposed, should be resisted by all the opposition which the Nonconformist body could exercise. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Mr. CRAIG (Glasgow) also supported the resolution. He said that if the whole of the voluntaries of Scotland had only been as true in their principles, and as earnest and ardent in their work, as Mr. Renton, of Kelso—(Hear, hear)—they would have, ere now, been far advanced in the work for which they were now striving. (Hear, hear.) But there was little or no use in disguising the fact that very few Scotch ministers had yet had the boldness to avow such sentiments on secular education.

Mr. GEORGE BROWN (Aberdeen) and the Rev. J. FLETCHER (Christchurch, Hampshire) also supported the resolution, which was adopted.

#### THE FUNCTION OF THE TEACHER AS TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Mr. R. W. DALE, who had obtained leave at an earlier stage of the meeting to re-introduce the question of the separation of secular and religious teaching, which had been considered at the conference in the Free-trade Hall on the previous night, now proposed a motion on the subject with a view to clear away some misconceptions which had arisen as to the decision of the meeting. He apologised for the ambiguous character of the resolutions of the previous evening as proposed. Though the meeting had not seen the exact meaning which the resolution as originally framed was intended to convey, a writer in the *Times* of that morning had perfectly comprehended its intended meaning. The *Times* of that morning said:—"The conference distinctly refuse to adopt a proviso that religious teaching before and after the hours of secular instruction should not be conducted by the teachers engaged during those hours. What then," asked the *Times*, "is the difference between the system thus shadowed forth and the system actually in operation under the Act of 1870?" Under the present Act a schoolmaster engaged to give secular instruction was also engaged to give religious instruction before or after the secular teaching. The salary of a schoolmaster would be, say 90*l.* a year; and 5*l.* a year extra would be paid by the clergyman on condition that he should give a particular religious teaching for an hour before and after school every morning. It was to prevent this that the bracketed clause which had been struck out of the resolution on the previous evening had been framed, and in this object their strongest allies would be the schoolmasters themselves, who were groaning under the tyranny of clergymen. (Hear.) Their object was to prevent the closing of the profession of a schoolmaster to those who could not consent to teach Church doctrines in Church of England schools. He begged to move the following resolution:—

That in the event of school boards permitting religious communities to provide, at their own cost, for the giving of religious instruction out of school hours in buildings provided by the board, a proposal on which no opinion is pronounced, this conference desires to declare that in no case shall the schoolmasters be employed to give that instruction.

The Rev. Dr. HANNAY seconded the resolution. He had consented to do so as one who had objected to the bracketed clause, in order to show the vigilant censors of the conference and the press that the objection taken to that clause did not arise from any qualified approval of the proposition which was the main object of the resolution then under discussion—viz., to separate the function of the teacher in secular matters entirely from the function of the teacher in matters of religion.

The Rev. J. SONLEY JOHNSTONE, as the first who had taken exception to the bracketed clause, was happy to support the very satisfactory resolution which had now been proposed by Mr. Dale—Mr. HARTLEY, one of the secretaries of the Sunday School Union of Birmingham, and Mr. JOSEPH SPENCER (Manchester) also supported the resolution.

The Rev. Professor ANTHONY said he was not quite satisfied with the resolution, as he believed it would be putting a religious disability upon teachers. He would suggest the following amendment:—

That it be no condition in the engagement of a schoolmaster by the board that he should be required to give religious instruction.

The Rev. Mr. SHIELDS (Wisbeach) called the attention of the conference to a case which he thought it was desirable should be more widely known. He happened to know a young man, a schoolmaster who was expecting to be a schoolmaster under a board. But he happened to be a Dissenter—(laughter)—he was not a Sunday-scholar, but a lay preacher, and was told by a clergyman that he could not be a schoolmaster under the board, as he was not a *bond fide* layman, inasmuch as he went out to preach the Gospel. (Laughter, and repeated cries of "Shame.") This same young man applied to the clerk of the board, who wrote up to London to the Committee of Council to obtain information on the question, and the Committee of Council sent down a statement exactly similar to the views of the clergyman. (Hisses, and cries of "Shame.") In reply to Mr. Dale, Mr. Shields said that he had seen a copy of the letter written by the clerk of the board.

Mr. MIAL, who was loudly cheered, said the Nonconformist Association wished to lay no religious disability upon any man in the realm—(cheers); but they said that the schoolmaster was a representative of public authority, and that, in his character as an officer employed by Government to do certain things, he should not take religious teaching and instruction from any body of men by which a confusion should be made on the minds of those with whom he came in contact as to the sphere of action in which they might legitimately act. (Hear, hear.) So long as he was not employed by any religious body, and so long as he was acting only upon his own responsibility, out of the sphere which the law assigned to him, he might exercise whatever religious influence he had, and teach to anybody who would listen to his teaching. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then passed with one dissentient.

#### MR. MIAL'S MOTION FOR DISESTABLISHMENT IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

The Rev. WM. STATHAM, of Hull, moved:—

That this conference desires to express its cordial approval of the action of Mr. Edward Mial, M.P., in submitting to Parliament last session a motion for the disestablishment of the Churches of England and Scotland, and its admiration of the courage, vigour, and consistency with which throughout his public life he had illustrated and defended the principles of religious equality.

He said that Mr. Mial in proposing his motion took a course altogether like himself—brave, and wise, and fair. He urged them to rekindle the fire of their old zeal in the heroic cause, until Mr. Mial carried them to victory. (Applause.)

Mr. BENJAMIN ARMITAGE seconded the motion. He said they were engaged in an enterprise which had for its purpose the doing of a great good—politically, socially, and religiously—to the people of the country. Mr. Mial had carried on the cause with unwavering courage and unerring patriotism. He was the political leader of the Nonconformists of the country, and he believed that Mr. Mial would be as proud of his army as his army was of its leader. (Applause.)

The resolution was passed amid enthusiastic cheering.

Mr. MIAL, in acknowledging the resolution, said he agreed with Mr. Armitage entirely that the Nonconformists had conferred honour upon him, and that it was a great distinction to a man, and that he ought to feel proud that he was acknowledged as the leader of such an assemblage as had met in Manchester during the last two days. (Cheers.) For intellectual vigour, for self-restraint, for a high sense of moral feeling, for a determination to sacrifice everything that could be sacrificed where principle was not concerned, in order that unity might be effected, for the clearness with which great political and politico-ecclesiastical principles had been put forth in the resolutions adopted, and for the high order of eloquence by which they had been argued out and sustained, he did not remember that any assembly had been called together, at least within the range of his experience and observation, equal to this. (Hear, hear.) They had spoken of his courage. He did not take to himself the compliment that they had paid him. The strongest feeling that weighed with him in bringing forward the motion which he did in the House of Commons was, first, a desire to accomplish the goal of his life, that for which he had long longed, laboured, and prayed, and striven

when the opportunity presented itself—(cheers)—and, secondly, because his conscience was weighed down with something like the feeling which the apostle experienced when he said, "Yea; woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." He had been sustained by the sympathy and, he might say, by the prayers of the Nonconformists throughout the country, and it was in the faith that those prayers would be answered that he rejoiced in the experience which he had never had before in his life, that on the morning of the day upon which he was to bring forward the motion the clouds all lifted off his mind. He could take no credit to himself; he could only say that he had attempted to perform a duty from which he had shrunk, and that he was assisted in the performance of it. Whatever might be the future, or whatever might be the modes in which he should attempt to follow up this movement hereafter, he did feel that the great end for which he had laboured had been accomplished, and that he had been a feeble instrument in the hands of Divine Providence, in being permitted to introduce to the Legislature of this country a full exposition of the great principles of religious equality, and the spirituality of the Church of Christ. (Hear, hear.) With him the work had been very much a religious work. He had been sustained and prompted by a religious feeling, and so long as God might spare his life, and might continue to him his powers, in some way or other, whether as leader or as follower, he should be rejoiced to help forward this great and mighty work. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN proposed a resolution, thanking the Society of Friends in Manchester for the kindness shown in freely granting to the use of the conference their meeting house; to the committee of the Friends' Institute for the courtesy with which they had promoted the comfort and convenience of the delegates by placing the rooms of the institute at their disposal. (Cheers.)

Mr. BEITH seconded the resolution, which was carried with acclamation.

The Rev. H. W. CROSSKEY then proposed the following resolution:—

That the heartiest thanks of the delegates here assembled be given to the chairman, secretaries, and members of the committee of the Manchester Nonconformist Association for the zeal, energy, liberality, and ability with which they have discharged the heavy and responsible labours which have been imposed upon them in connection with this conference—a conference which marks an epoch in the history of Nonconformity, and in the history of the religious liberties of this empire. That this conference also desires to express its cordial gratitude for the hearty and generous hospitality which they have received from the friends in Manchester and its neighbourhood. (Cheers.)

Mr. SNAPE, Liverpool, seconded the resolution, which was carried with repeated cheers.

The Rev. ALEXANDER THOMSON briefly acknowledged the vote of thanks on behalf of the Manchester committee.

The Chairman having vacated the chair, Mr. Mial was called to his place.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman having been carried with acclamation, Mr. JOHNSON delivered an impressive closing address, which we regret being unable to report, and then the members of the conference separated.

#### THE PRESS AND THE CONFERENCE.

Owing to the heavy demands on our space, we regret our inability to do justice to the comments of our contemporaries on the Manchester Conference, or what many of them describe as "the Nonconformist revolt," to the extent we should desire.

The *Times* asserts that the Nonconformists at Manchester have fallen into the same error in attacking the Government for its conduct in reference to the Elementary Education Act as the United States have fallen into in the matter of our neutrality. They have mistaken justice for partiality. They complain of unfriendliness because they themselves have not been actively favoured. They had looked to Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues to assist in the disestablishment and disendowment of the English Church, and they saw in the establishment or attempted establishment of a system of national education the means of driving a wedge into it. The Act drives no wedge into it at all; it leaves the Church where it was; and this toleration is converted by its opponents into giving it a new lease of existence. The real character of the opposition to the Education Act now brought to a head at Manchester may be gathered from a comparison between the system the speakers are willing to approve and the system against which they rage so furiously. The speakers at the conference committed themselves to the latest programme of the Birmingham League. This is in effect the scheme of the Education Act, with this exception—that the management of the schools during the hours of secular teaching would be transferred from the present hands to the hands of a school board. The movement of these political Nonconformists of Manchester is nothing more nor less than a jealous assault on the existing preponderance of the Church of England as an educational agency.

The *Telegraph* remarks that the Nonconformists declare that no State grants, or payments from the rates, should be given to any school where religion is taught, no matter how perfect its secular teaching may be; and that all schools aided by the taxes or rates must be under the management of the freely elected boards. Very good. But what is to be done as regards compulsory education for the children of the poor? The poorer Roman Catholics would rather go to gaol than send their children to



a secular school. As to the Dissenters' menaces that they will break up the Liberal party if their views are not adopted, the *Telegraph* would prefer to see the party for ten or twenty years out of power rather than that it should accept the intolerance and illiberality of the Manchester programme. If the present Ministry were low enough to be guided, like a fish, by its tail—to go for leadership from one extreme to the other—it would soon come to an end.

The *Spectator*, some of whose arguments are noticed elsewhere, says that the Nonconformists have gone in for a manly and intelligent policy, only it is revolutionary. They have a perfect right to adopt it. But it is hardly decent to accuse the Government, which has deviated from the educational traditions of England only in their own direction, of turning its back on the past because it does not join heart and soul in their revolution. This, and our strong condemnation of the tone adopted by many of the speakers—though not by Mr. Richard, M.P. for Merthyr Tydvil, who was eminently temperate and fair—towards the wise Liberal statesman responsible for the Education Act, are the only criticisms we (*Spectator*) have to pass on the tone of the Nonconformist Conference, which, so far as our full reports of the first two days and our rather meagre report of the last day's meetings goes, seems to have been, while it kept off the subject of Mr. Forster, exceedingly manly and good. The Nonconformists have appealed to the people of England, and to the people of England they must go. No Government could embody such a policy in any Parliamentary measure without an appeal to the people. The *Spectator* only hopes that when that appeal is fairly made, it will be clearly understood that what Nonconformists desire is a still wider separation between religion and life; a final taking of religious teaching out of the hands of lay teachers, and, virtually no doubt, an absolute surrender of it into professional hands.

The *Saturday Review* characterises the conference as the most important event that has yet occurred in the long controversy upon elementary education. The Nonconformists have opened their eyes to the fact that there is no middle term between denominationalism and secularism. Many speeches of the leaders of the conference showed that they have thoroughly made up their minds to accept secularism as the only way of escape from denominationalism. The large and gelatinous mass of religious sentiment which has shrunk from definite religious teaching in State schools on the one side, and from no religious teaching in State schools on the other side, will now have to make its choice between the two. The contest will lie for the future between, on the one hand, the Church of England, the Roman Catholics, and perhaps the Wesleyans—all agreeing in demanding State aid towards the maintenance of their separate schools; and, on the other, the Congregationalists, Baptists, and persons of no professed creed—all agreeing in opposing any appropriation of public money to this purpose. So great a change in the composition of the opposing hosts cannot fail to have an important influence upon the course of the battle.

The *John Bull* regards the conference as a grievous failure, so far as the interests of political Nonconformity are concerned. "That it will be devoid of results we are far from affirming; but those results, as we fondly, and we believe with reason, anticipate, will be very different to those contemplated by its promoters. The violence and intolerance of noisy political Nonconformists—for we desire to separate them entirely in these remarks from pious, earnest Dissenters, who simply wish for religious liberty to worship God as they think right—are now abundantly manifest. Respectable Liberals see now not merely the character of the extreme politicians with whom they have to act; but they know that these men will not be content unless they are masters, conceiving that they have far too long been humble servants of the party in power."

In the same spirit the *Church Review* speaks of the movement as nothing more or less than a jealous assault on the existing preponderance of the Church of England as an educational agency. "Yet they are those who helped Mr. Gladstone and his followers into office, and to propitiate whom so much injury and injustice has already been done, and is still threatened to be done, to the Church, both in her own interests and those of her Universities. But thank God the time seems at length drawing near when the country will no longer tolerate such mischievous alliances by a government which thereby not only falsifies its own integrity, but acts perfidiously to the sovereignty itself."

The *Inquirer* thinks that the difficulties of the situation were ignored by the conference. "Our Nonconformist friends, carried away at present by the popular excitement of the hour, must not forget that they are not yet the people of England, or even anything approaching to the majority of the people of England, when we separate from them the Roman Catholics, who on this question are strongly opposed to them. In the extreme of their devotion to only one side of a great question they are apt to forget that there are other principles besides those of which they are the advocates, and that other people have quite as tender and scrupulous consciences as their own, which must be respected by any statesman framing a national system of education adapted to all sections of thought, and to all existing interests and tendencies. The whole question of national education has been delayed and indefinitely thrown back in this country partly

through the strife of sects and Churches, and partly it must be confessed, through the jealous suspicions and unyielding attitude of the great body of orthodox Dissenters, ever more watchful concerning their own real or imaginary rights than of the interests of the community at large." Besides, says our Unitarian contemporary, "the denominational difficulty has already been solved in practical working; and in our humble opinion the Government have only acted with statesmanlike wisdom in an education policy which is based upon the various systems already in existence, in the conviction that the best will gradually vindicate itself by the unfailing test of practical experience."

The *Leeds Mercury* will regret it, in carrying out the programme of the conference, we are to have a new political departure, which will simply mean division and dissolution, followed by a weary wandering in the wilderness, to be crowned, it may be, by the enjoyment of the promised land at some distant time, but in the meanwhile producing a political dead-lock.

### Births, Marriages, and Deaths.

A uniform charge of One Shilling (prepaid) is made for announcements under this heading, for which postage-stamps will be received. All such announcements must be authenticated by the name and address of the sender.

#### BIRTH.

BROWN.—Jan. 25, at 100, Malpas-road, New Cross, the wife of Mr. Alfred Brown, of a son.

#### MARRIAGES.

ROBINSON—GREAVES.—Jan. 21, at the High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham, Mr. Joseph Robinson, to Louisa Mary, second daughter of Mr. William Greaves.

JENKS—MCCOY.—Jan. 26, at the residence of the bride, by the Revs. W. Morley Punshon and S. M. Rice, Isaac Jenks, jun., of Wolverhampton, to Mary E. McCoy, of Jersey City, N.J., U.S.A.

McHAFFIE—LANGRIDGE.—Jan. 30, at Selhurst Congregational Church, by the father of the bride, John Finlay, McHaffie, London, to Eva Margaret, eldest daughter of the Rev. N. T. Langridge, South Norwood.

#### DEATHS.

SCHNADHORST.—Jan. 4, at her residence, Aston, near Birmingham, Mrs. Schnadhorst, in the 65th year of her age, deeply regretted.

WINN.—Jan. 18, at High-street, Rochdale, Jane Lorimer (late of Keir, Dumfriesshire), relict of Francis Winn.

TILLYARD.—Jan. 28, at his father's residence, Thorpe Hamlet, Norwich, Robert Kitten Tillyard, aged 33.

MORRIS.—Jan. 23, at Boroughbridge, Yorks, the Rev. Joseph Morris, Wesleyan minister, in the 49th year of his age, and the 27th of his ministry.

BREAKFAST.—EPPE'S COCOA.—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected cocoa, Mr. Eppe has provided our breakfast-tables with a delicately-flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills."—Civil Service Gazette. Made simply with Boiling Water or Milk. Each packet is labelled—"James Eppe & Co., Homoeopathic Chemists, London." Also, makers of Eppe's Cacaoine, a very thin beverage for evening use.

HOLLOWAY'S PILLS AND OINTMENT.—A frequent cause of gout and rheumatism is the inflammatory state of the blood, attended with bad digestion, and general debility. A few doses of these Pills, taken in time, are an effectual preventative against gout and rheumatism. Anyone who has an attack of either should use Holloway's Ointment also, the powerful properties of which, combined with the effect of the Pills, must infallibly effect a cure. These Pills act directly on the blood, which they purify, and improve. Having subdued the severity of these diseases, perseverance with the Ointment, after fomenting the affected joints with warm brine, will speedily relax all stiffness and prevent any permanent contraction.

KINAHAN'S LL WHISKY.—This celebrated and most delicious old mellow spirit is the very cream of Irish Whiskies, in quality unrivalled, perfectly pure, and more wholesome than the finest Cognac Brandy. Note the words "Kinahan's LL," on seal, label and cork. Wholesale Depot, 6A, Great Titchfield-street, Oxford-street, W.

### Markets.

#### CORN EXCHANGE, MARK LANE, Monday, Jan. 29.

The supply of English and foreign wheat for to-day's market was moderate. The trade remained inactive, and English wheat made slowly the prices of Monday last. Foreign wheat met a retail demand at previous prices. In flour we had little doing; prices remained without change. Peas, beans, and Indian corn were unaltered in value. Malt—barley was fully as dear; grinding descriptions were a dull sale at late rates. Of oats the arrivals were not large, but the demand was restricted, and the business done was at the quotations of this day week. At the ports of call few fresh arrivals have been reported. The prices for cargoes remain the same as last week.

METROPOLITAN MEAT MARKET, Monday, Jan. 29.—The market to-day was moderately supplied with meat. For all qualities a slow demand prevailed, and prices generally favoured buyers. The imports into London last week consisted of 139 qrs. 1,151 packages from Hamburg, 4 from Rotterdam, and 36 from Harlingen.

Per 8lbs. by the carcase.

| s.              | d. | s. | d. | s. | d.           | s. | d. |   |   |
|-----------------|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|---|---|
| Inferior beef   | 3  | 4  | 3  | 10 | Middling do. | 4  | 2  | 4 | 4 |
| Middling do.    | 3  | 10 | 4  | 0  | Prime do.    | 5  | 0  | 5 | 4 |
| Prime large do. | 4  | 2  | 4  | 4  | Large pork   | 3  | 4  | 4 | 0 |
| Prime small do. | 4  | 6  | 4  | 8  | Small do.    | 4  | 2  | 4 | 0 |
| Veal            | 5  | 8  | 6  | 4  | Lamb         | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 |
| Inferior Mutton | 3  | 8  | 4  | 0  |              |    |    |   |   |

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET, Monday, Jan. 29.—The total imports of foreign stock into London last week amounted to 8,619 head. In the corresponding week in 1871 we received 3,883; in 1870, 7,195; in 1869, 2,039; and in 1868, 1,930 head. In the cattle trade a quiet tone has been prevalent. As regards beasts, the supply has been only moderate, and a condition of a portion of the show has been satisfactory. Transactions have been restricted, but prices have been maintained, and best Scots have sold at 5s. 6d. to 5s. 8d. per 8lbs. From Norfolk,

Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire we received about 1,500 Scots and crosses; from other parts of England about 250 various breeds; from Scotland 149 Scots and crosses. Only moderate supplies of sheep have been on offer. There has been an absence of animation in the demand, and prices have tended in favour of buyers. The best Downs and half-breeds have been disposed of at 6s. 10d. to 7s. per 8lbs. Calves have met a slow sale, and the demand for pigs has been moderate.

Per 8lbs., to sink the offal.

| s.                 | d. | s. | d. | s. | d.                 | s. | d. |   |   |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|--------------------|----|----|---|---|
| Inf. coarse beasts | 3  | 6  | 4  | 4  | Pr. coarse woolled | 6  | 4  | 6 | 8 |
| Second quality     | 4  | 6  | 5  | 0  | PrimeSouthdown     | 6  | 10 | 7 | 0 |
| Prime large oxen   | 5  | 2  | 5  | 4  | Lge coarse calves  | 4  | 6  | 5 | 2 |
| Prime Scots        | 5  | 4  | 5  | 6  | Prime small        | 5  | 4  | 6 | 0 |
| Coarse inf. sheep  | 4  | 4  | 5  | 0  | Large hogs         | 3  | 8  | 4 | 4 |
| Second quality     | 5  | 4  | 6  | 0  | Neat sm. porkers   | 4  | 6  | 5 | 0 |

PROVISIONS, Monday, Jan. 29.—The arrivals last week from Ireland were 584 firkins butter and 4,930 bales bacon; and from foreign ports 20,626 packages butter, 231 bales and 514 boxes bacon. The sale for both Irish and foreign butters has been very slow during last week, with the exception of the finest descriptions of the latter, which are scarce. The bacon market has been steady during the week without change in prices.

COVENT GARDEN MARKET, Friday, Jan. 26.—There has been rather more business done here during the past week, but the trade is much influenced by the weather. We have had a fair attendance of buyers during the week, but no advance in prices is to be noticed; a few transactions in best goods are the only feature in which improvements may have occurred.

HOPS.—BOROUGH, Monday, Jan. 29.—The demand which prevails for the last growth is necessarily of a limited character, the stock unsold being brought within a very small compass. Holders in consequence are very independent, and prices are thus rendered stronger. Choice and medium yearlings attract more attention, and during the past week considerable business has been effected in this class, at full rates. The foreign markets are quiet, with improved rates. Latest advices from New York quote a moderate trade to be doing. Mid and East Kent, 10l. 12s. to 17l.; Weald, 8l. 10s., 9l. 9s., to 10l. 10s.; Sussex, 7l. 15s., 8l. 8s., to 9l. 9s.; Farnham and country, 11l. 13s. to 16l. Yearlings—Mid and East Kent, 3l. 4l. 4s., to 6l. 10s.; Weald of Kent, 3l. 4l. 5l. 15s.; Sussex, 3l. 3l. 10s., to 5l. 5s.; Farnham and country, 4l. 10s., 6l. to 7l.; Old, 1l. 5s., 1l. 10s., to 2l.

POTATOES.—BOROUGH AND SPITALFIELDS, Monday, Jan. 29.—The supplies have been good; the trade has been dull, at about late rates. Last week's import was confined to 90 tons from Dunkirk and 5 sacks from Rotterdam. Regents, 80s. to 120s. per ton; Flukes, 120s. to 140s. per ton; Rocks, 70s. to 90s. per ton; Victorias, 100s. to 140s. per ton; French, 60s. to 70s. per ton.

OIL, Monday, Jan. 29.—Lined oil has been dull, and Rape and other oils have sold slowly.

TALLOW, Monday, Jan. 29.—The market is quieter. Y.C., spot, 50s. 3d. per cwt. Town tallow, 44s. 9d. net cash.

### Advertisements.

CHLORALUM. An odourless, non-poisonous disinfectant. The saline antiseptic. Harmless as common salt.

15, Pembroke-road, Dublin,

11th September, 1871.

Sir,—I beg to state that the chloralum powder and solution have been largely employed in this city, and with the most complete success.

The bed of the River Liffey, which emitted a very offensive odour during the recent warm weather, was most satisfactorily disinfected by chloralum powder at the rate of only one pound per 25 square feet.

I have found it most efficacious as a purifier of stables, and I use it constantly in my own house. Altogether, I may say of chloralum that it is a very valuable sanitary agent, and one which is certain to come into general use.

I remain, your obedient servant,

CHAS. A. CAMERON, M.D.

Professor of Hygiene, Royal College of Surgeons, and Analyst of the City of Dublin.

CHLORALUM IS DISINFECTANT.

CHLORALUM IS A SALINE ANTISEPTIC.

CHLORALUM IS ASTRINGENT.

CHLORALUM is sold in quarts, 2s.; pints, 1s.; half-pints, 6d. By the gallon, 5s. In large quantities by special contract at greatly-reduced prices.

CHLORALUM FOR CHOLERA.

CHLORALUM FOR SICK ROOMS.

CHLORALUM POWDER.

CHLORALUM POWDER IS HARMLESS.

CHLORALUM POWDER.—The best stable disinfectant Chloralum Powder will be found invaluable in—

|                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hospitals                  | Cowsheds                       |
| Closets and Ill-Ventilated | Alleys and Roads               |
| Apartments                 | Sewers and Gulleys             |
| Earth Closets              | In the Dairy and all kinds of  |
| Dustbins                   | Provision Stores               |
| Wine and Beer Cellars      | In the Kennel, and in Poultry- |
| Stables                    | houses                         |

Chloralum Powder is not caustic or hurtful in any way, and although it absorbs moisture, it does not deteriorate by keeping.

Packs, 1 cwt., for 15s., and in 6d. and 1s. packets.

CHLORALUM WOOL.

CHLORALUM WOOL IN SURGERY.

CHLORALUM WOOL IN HOSPITALS.

CHLORALUM WOOL.—The New Styptic and Antiseptic Surgical Dressing. In pound and half-pound packages, at 6s. per lb.

CHLORALUM WADDING.—CHLORALUM WADDING, in sheets, price 2s. 6d.

Chloralum Wadding is used extensively as a disinfectant in coffins. A dead body, when covered with Chloralum Wool, cannot convey infection.

CHLORALUM IS SOLD BY ALL CHYMISTS.

CHLORALUM CO.,—1 and 2, Great Winchester-street buildings, E.C.



**SOCIETY for the LIBERATION of RELIGION from STATE PATRONAGE and CONTROL.**

The Society requires the services of a thoroughly competent gentleman as ORGANISING AGENT and LECTURER for the Lancashire district. Applications to be made by the 5th of February.

Particulars may be obtained of the undersigned.

J. CARVELL WILLIAMS, Secretary.

2, Serjeants'-inn, Fleet-street, London.

**WANTED, an Experienced NURSE,** to take charge of Three Children, not under Twenty-eight. State wages.—Apply to Mrs. C., Fern Lodge, Higham-hill, Walthamstow.

**A PARTNER in a School,** who has had great success in preparing Candidates for Examinations, desires to RECEIVE, at his private residence, a few BOARDERS requiring extra Tuition. References given.—For terms, &c., apply, B., 3, Union-street, Rochester.

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION for WOMEN, 1872.** London Centre.

An EXAMINATION will be held, beginning on MONDAY, June 17, 1872. Candidates wishing for information or desirous of attending Preparatory Classes or Lectures in London are requested to apply to the Secretary for the London Centre, Miss E. Bonham Carter, Ravensbourne, Beckenham.

**THE REV. W. WALTERS, of Birmingham,** wishes to inform his correspondents that his present address is BIRCH VILLAS, BIRCHFIELDS, BIRMINGHAM; and requests that neither Christchurch, Aston, nor Aston Park be put on any Letters, &c., addressed to him, as thereby communications are delayed, and unnecessary expense incurred.

**AT a MEETING of the COMMITTEE of DEPUTIES of the several CONGREGATIONS of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS of the Three Denominations, Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist, in and within twelve miles of London,** appointed to protect their civil rights, held on the 11th January, 1872.

Present.—S. R. PATTISON, Esq., F.G.S., in the Chair.

**RESOLVED**,—That the Committee have heard with satisfaction that Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN intends to re-introduce the BURIAL ACTS' AMENDMENT BILL in the House of Commons early in the ensuing Session.

That in the opinion of the Committee the Bill ought to be allowed to pass for the following reasons:—

1. It assimilates the law in England and Wales to the law now in force in Scotland and Ireland.
2. The right of Parishioners to be buried in their parish churchyard is undoubted; and it is inconsistent with recent legislation, and not in accordance with religious freedom, that the friends of a deceased parishioner should be compelled at his funeral to accept the services of a Clergyman not selected by themselves, and probably unknown to the deceased, while the minister of religion on whose ministrations their deceased friend attended during his life, shall be excluded from officiating at his burial.
3. That the existing law, which permits the Incumbent of a parish to refuse Christian burial in certain cases, has been arbitrarily and illegally enforced in numerous instances; and even where the interference of the Incumbent has been in accordance with the law, such interference has been a source of great pain and discomfort to the Clergyman himself and to his Parishioners.
4. Ample provisions are contained in the Bill to guard against the abuse of the privileges sought to be obtained by it, and the fees of the Rector, Vicar, or other Incumbent of the parish are secured to him, although he may not be called upon to discharge any duty.

The Committee, remembering the large majorities by which the second reading of the Bill was carried in the Sessions of 1870 and 1871, recommend their friends to hold meetings in favour of the Bill, and to urge their representatives in the House of Commons to give the Bill their support in its progress through the House.

The Committee are of opinion that if a vigorous effort be made in the ensuing Session, the pertinacious opposition by which the Bill has been met may be overcome and the Bill be passed.

C. SHEPHEARD, Secretary.

78, Coleman-street, E.C.

**ORPHAN WORKING SCHOOL, Maitland Park, Havestock-hill, instituted May 10, 1758,** for Children of both sexes, and from any part of the Kingdom. Under the patronage of Her Most Gracious Majesty the QUEEN and their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of WALES.—At the 114th Annual General Court of the Governors, held at the London Tavern, on Thursday, January 25, for the ELECTION of TWENTY-FIVE ORPHAN CHILDREN out of a list of 124 candidates.

JOHN REMINGTON MILLS, Esq., President.

At the close of the ballot the following were declared to be successful:—

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Sear, Caroline ... 492     | 14. Selly, Philip Henry ... 608 |
| 2. Aspinall, Ann Jane ... 477 | 15. Frost, Thomas ... 593       |
| 3. Glasson, Eliza M. ... 465  | 16. Dougan, William ... 591     |
| 4. Wheatley, Emily ... 447    | 17. Davis, John ... 576         |
| 5. Ingram, Sarah A. ... 427   | 18. Chandler, Frederick ... 570 |
| 6. Braithwaite, Emma ... 341  | 19. Fort, Albert H. ... 563     |
| 7. Gunstone, C. B. ... 323    | 20. Beavis, James ... 558       |
| 8. Eves Mary Ann ... 226      | 21. Raudall, William C. ... 558 |
| 9. Lyons, Cath. S. ... 218    | 22. Palmer, Frederick ... 557   |
| 10. Phillips, Rose M. ... 206 | 23. Teulon, John ... 557        |
| 11. Morter, Frank ... 638     | 24. Best, Harry W. ... 522      |
| 12. Barrier, W. J. W. ... 619 | 25. Westbrook, G. E. L. ... 478 |
| 13. Vans, Frank H. ... 613    |                                 |

A vote of thanks to the Chairman and to the Scrutineers terminated the proceedings.

JOSEPH SOUL, Secretary.

No. 73, Cheapside, E.C.

This Charity has accommodation for 400 orphans, but is not full at present for want of sufficient funds. The Committee very earnestly appeal for help to enable them to maintain the full number in the Institution. The children are educated and wholly provided for from seven years until they are of age to obtain situations. The Charity depend upon voluntary benevolence for four-fifths of its annual support. Orphans for the July Election can be at once nominated by Governors. Contributions are urgently solicited. Cheques crossed London Joint-Stock Bank.

**DR. WILLIAMS'S SCHOLARSHIPS in the UNIVERSITY of GLASGOW.**

Dr. Williams's Trustees announce THREE VACANCIES during the present year.

Intending Candidates can obtain information as to Subjects of examination, &c., by communicating with the Rev. THOMAS HUNTER, at the Library, 8, Queen-square, Bloomsbury, London.

**BRIXTON INDEPENDENT CHURCH.**

The Rev. BALDWIN BROWN proposes to deliver a course of four SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES as follows:—General Subject—The Three Monastic Graces, Simplicitas, Benignitas, Hilaritas.

February 4th.—The Medieval Ideal of the Christian Life.  
February 11th.—The Grace of Simplicity.  
February 18th.—The Grace of Kindness.  
February 25th.—The Grace of Gladness.  
Divine Service to commence at half-past Six o'clock.

**TO the ELECTORS of the NORTHERN DIVISION of the WEST RIDING of YORKSHIRE.**

GENTLEMEN,—By the death of Sir Francis Crossley you are called upon to elect a representative to the Commons House of Parliament. In common with the rest of this constituency I deeply lament the death of a gentleman who has served you so long and so faithfully. Ever constant to his political convictions, he was found in the front rank of the Liberal party, both in the Legislature and in his native county; and following the dictates of a generous nature, he dispensed his benefactions with a noble munificence. His name will be fondly cherished by his countrymen, and his example and character will long maintain their powerful and beneficent influence.

In compliance with a request of a meeting of representatives of the Liberal party held yesterday, I offer myself as a candidate, and solicit the favour of your suffrages at the forthcoming election.

I refer you with confidence to my public conduct while in Parliament, where your late member and myself were almost invariably found supporting the same measures of Liberal policy; I am therefore emboldened to think that my candidature will be acceptable to a great majority of this important constituency.

If returned to the House of Commons I shall cordially support the Ballot Bill promised by the Government, as the first public measure of the session. I am sanguine enough to believe that under its operation our local and Parliamentary elections will be more peaceable and pure, and that substantial security will be afforded to the conscientious but dependent voter.

The recognised policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations, coupled with the adoption of arbitration in the settlement of international disputes, will eventually lead to a mutual reduction of armaments, to the continuance of the blessings of peace, and to a retrenchment in public expenditure. I shall cordially support all measures in accordance with this policy.

It is essential to the welfare of the State that the rising generation should be provided with the blessings of religious training as well as secular knowledge. The duty of imparting the former will be best discharged by parents and our numerous Christian Churches, while the State may legitimately provide the latter. In observing this wise and natural distinction, we shall best solve the formidable religious difficulty which is now revealing itself in different parts of the Empire.

The Education Act of 1870 requires such amendment as will include the general establishment of School Boards, and the removal of Clause 25. Of course in any modifications to be made due regard should be paid to existing schools which have been called into existence by voluntary agency and aid from the public purse.

In harmony with the growing conviction of the age, it will be my duty to support any measures tending to religious freedom and equality.

Legislation has at all times claimed a control over the sale of intoxicating liquors. An extension of such control might, no doubt, do much to increase the sobriety of the people, and the Legislature ought to occupy itself immediately with the consideration of this most important question,—with due regard to existing interests.

After this exposition of my views, it is scarcely necessary to say that I shall give the present Government my cordial support so long as it is loyal to the great principles upon which it was placed in power.

The above and other public questions I shall have the opportunity of explaining at greater length on visiting the various parts of the Division. If I should become your representative, I shall give my best attention to the various interests of this large constituency.

I remain, Gentlemen,  
Your obedient Servant,  
ISAAC HOLDEN.

Oakworth House,  
Keighley, 16th January, 1872.

**THE LONDON INFIRMARY for DISEASES of the LEGS, Ulcers, Varicose Veins, &c., 1, Red Lion-square, W.C.** Established in 1857, under the distinguished patronage of Miss Florence Nightingale, and many members of the Aristocracy.

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